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CASSELL'S HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



SIGNING OF PEACE IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS, PALACE OF VERSAILLES,
JUNE 28, 1919

From the Painting by Sir William Orpen, R.A., in the Imperial War Museum.

Cassell's History of the British People

BY

Ernest A. Baker, M.A., D.Lit.; Ernest Barker, M.A.,
D.Litt., LL.D.; M. M. C. Calthrop, F.R.Hist.S.;
H. W. C. Davis, M.A., C.B.E.; C. R. Fay, M.A., D.Sc.;
Hilda Johnstone, M.A.; Sir Richard Lodge, M.A.,
LL.D., Litt.D.; J. D. Mackie, M.A.; H. E. Malden,
M.A.; K. W. M. Pickthorn, M.A.; F. M. Powicke, M.A.,
Litt.D.; R. R. Reid, M.A., D.Lit.; L. Stampa, M.A.,
F.S.A.; Montague Summers, M.A.; T. F. Tout, M.A.,
F.B.A.; G. S. Veitch, M.A., Litt.D.; Kenneth H. Vickers,
M.A.; J. W. Williams, M.A.; Gabriel Woods, M.A.



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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

ERNEST A. BAKER, M.A., D.Lit.

Lecturer in English, University College, London.

ERNEST BARKER, M.A., D.Litt., LL.D.

Principal of King's College, London; late Fellow and Tutor, New College, Oxford.

M. M. C. CALTHROP, F.R.Hist.S.

H. W. C. DAVIS, M.A., C.B.E.

Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, and Professor of Modern History, Manchester University.

C. R. FAY, M.A., D.Sc.

Fellow and Lecturer, Christ's College, Cambridge, and Professor of Economic History, University of Toronto (1921-3).

HILDA JOHNSTONE, M.A.

Professor of Modern History in the University of London; late Assistant Lecturer in History, Manchester University.

SIR RICHARD LODGE, M.A., LL.D., Litt.D.

Professor of History, Edinburgh University.

J. D. MACKIE, M.A.

Lecturer in Modern History in the University of St. Andrews.

H. E. MALDEN, M.A.

Hon. Sec. of the Royal Historical Society, and Author of "English Records."

KENNETH W. M. PICKTHORN, M.A.

Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

F. M. POWICKE, M.A., Litt.D.

Professor of Mediæval History, Manchester University; late Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, and Professor of Modern History, Queen's University, Belfast.

R. R. REID, M.A., D.Lit.

Late Senior Assistant in the Department of History, University College, London, and Director of Studies in History, Girton College, Cambridge.

L. STAMPA, M.A., F.S.A.

Lecturer in Modern History, Exeter College, Oxford.

MONTAGUE SUMMERS, M.A.

Editor of "The Works of Aphra Behn" and "Restoration Comedies."

T. F. TOUT, M.A., F.B.A.

Professor of History and Director of Advanced Study in History, Manchester University; late Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford, and ex-President of the Historical Association.

G. S. VEITCH, M.A., Litt.D.

Professor of Modern History in the University of Liverpool.

KENNETH H. VICKERS, M.A.

Principal of University College, Southampton; late Professor of Modern History, Durham University.

J. W. WILLIAMS, M.A., B.Litt.

Lecturer in Mediæval History in the University of St. Andrews; formerly Scholar of Exeter College, Oxford.

GABRIEL WOODS, M.A.

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BY KENNETH W. M. PICKTHORN, M.A.

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THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

VOLUME VII

CHAPTER I

BEFORE THE WAR

THE history of the British people in the twentieth century, so far as knowledge of it is already possible, is the history of the British part in the European War; that part had two aspects, active and passive. The activity of the British people may have been altruistic or perfidious, wise or foolish, inadequate or excessive: that it was of the first order of importance cannot be doubted, and there is no one who has not a fairly clear conception of its general character and a pretty exact memory of some branch of it. With the effects of the war on the people the case is different: of this, too, no one is without first-hand knowledge, but the knowledge is much more minutely and unevenly parcelled; there is very much less general agreement, and infinitely less which can safely be claimed as truth. This difference arises from a great variety of causes, of which two require some special mention as at once the greatest in effect and the easiest to overlook. One is the temptation, to which all men are subject, of attributing to some one great cause all the effects of which they require explanation: as, for instance, some see the whole modern world as a monstrous Jewish conspiracy, and

others as an infinitely repeated exemplification of Darwin's biological hypotheses.

There is another general tendency hardly less inimical to a just appreciation of the influence of the war upon national life and character: this is the inclination of the individual in the presence of great events to prophesy their results, and his later unwillingness to avow himself a false prophet: thus, the war was to destroy industrial civilization, to end party and social strife, to make England into one vast crèche for war-babies (or alternatively into a Christian but non-sectarian paradise for heroes), and so on. No one now asserts that the British Isles are in all respects heavenly, nor the rising generation entirely illegitimate, nor that party prejudice and class hatred have altogether disappeared, nor that industry and commerce are completely annihilated, yet. But in so far as any one of these things has happened there are a good many people (especially among politicians and journalists) whose interest it is to assert that it has happened directly and exclusively in consequence of the war: and even in so far as it has not happened, they have a strong motive to give it every possible additional chance of happening. So that in any

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consideration of the British people during and after the war it is very necessary to remember that tendencies which seem to us permanent may be already in their decline, and that phenomena at whose war-time birth we imagine ourselves to have assisted may have been then already well on the way to maturity. This requires a serious mental effort, to whose success the best aid is a knowledge of previous history.

Pre-war Influences

Perhaps some justification is needed for the statement that the history of the century so far is the history of the war: as for the period since August, 1914, it is clear enough that it has been, and still is, mainly occupied with getting through the war and getting away from the war. For the earlier period it is not so clear. It is often asserted that that period was characterized by the struggle of one or more groups to bring on war, ending in their success: sometimes it is said that these groups were capitalists, sometimes capitalists of some particular industry; sometimes, more vaguely, militarists. It is possible to find this explanation unsatisfactory and yet to believe that those fourteen years were determined by the war, which they not merely preceded but prepared: nor does this necessitate acceptance of the view that all or any of the European governments desired war and worked to bring it about. That may or may not have been the case: what is certain is that they were pursuing incompatible ambitions, and that each government was fully conscious that this incompatibility might lead to war, and firmly resolved to use every means to ensure that war, if it came, should come in the most favourable conditions.

Moreover, in each country such private persons—whether merchants, students, soldiers, journalists, or mere busybodies—as concerned themselves with international relations, all saw that war was coming: some of these persons—the majority—took much the same view as their governments: they thought that war could not be avoided except at the sacrifice of what they valued even above peace, and therefore they set

themselves to make the expected war as advantageous, or as little disadvantageous, as possible: they urged conscription or supported a navy league, or advocated some special weapon of war or diplomatic system. The others—the minority—also saw war coming, but believed that it could be averted if only they preached vehemently enough that it was unchristian, or immoral, or profitable to the rich at the expense of the poor, or unprofitable to all concerned, or simply inconvenient. Perhaps they were right, at least so far that war might have been avoided if they had preached more vehemently or begun preaching earlier or used better arguments: doubtless there is little hope that war can be permanently prevented by anything short of a general conviction of its futility.

It is, then, certain at least that for some years before the war the behaviour both of governments and of leaders of opinion was almost strictly directed by the prospect of war, and that it has since been chiefly controlled first by the actuality and then by the memory of war: so that it is very little of an exaggeration to say that our history for the last twenty odd years is the history of our part, active and passive, in the war: only it must be remembered that our history began more than twenty years ago, and that not everything that has happened to us even in the last ten years is exclusively the product of the war.

How the War came

The first task, therefore, of any historian of the British people in the twentieth century must be some explanation of how the war came and how the governments and peoples of the British Empire prepared to avoid or to meet it: this involves some account of the composition and tendencies of Europe in the generation which made (or at least failed to prevent) the war, and it seems that a convenient method of performing this task will be to indicate some of the most significant diplomatic incidents and factors of that generation, and the British relation to them.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the German Empire was by far

POWER OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE

the strongest power in Europe: after the Franco-Prussian war its army was, and was known both by itself and by its neighbours to be, unchallengeable: its industry, if at first inferior to that of England, was expanding at a prodigious rate: its intellectual and spiritual prestige was higher than it had ever been, and as high as that of any other country, perhaps excessively high, as France's was excessively low: nor was its diplomatic situation less brilliant.

Relations of Germany, Russia, France

The foundations of the Triple Alliance were laid in 1883, before the *Dreikaiserbund* broke down, and even after the latter's disruption the wires to St. Petersburg were kept open to such effect that in 1887 Bismarck secured his treaty of reinsurance with Russia, and that it was not until well into the 'nineties that Russia definitely and effectively chose the friendship of France, and even then not wholly to the exclusion of Germany. Moreover, Germany, in the phrase which Bismarck borrowed from Metternich, was "a saturated power": she had ample materials for all her energies without risking adventure abroad, and was not hag-ridden by any urgent desire, like France for the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine, or Russia for the acquisition of Constantinople, or Austria-Hungary for expansion towards the south-east.

Germany entered on the last quarter of the nineteenth century in league with Russia, and the dissolving of that league was not the end of friendship: her situation in relation to the only other power whose strength was comparable with her own was no less favourable. British fleets and dependencies dominated the seas as German armies and alliances dominated Europe. The rôle of Britain in European politics is traditionally (and the tradition is even more firmly fixed in foreign than in British minds) to throw her weight into the scale against the strongest continental state. How well and with what motives that rôle has been played need not be inquired: that it has been maintained with remarkable if not absolute consistency will not be

doubted. Yet the shifting of British weight to counterpoise Germany began late, continued slowly, and was not complete till August, 1914.

Britain's Friendship with Germany

There was a great variety of reasons for the extreme slowness of this development. England, more truly than Germany, was "a saturated power": her politicians and her people were all agreed that her principal interest was peace, and that the quarters from which that interest might most probably be threatened were Russia, whose expansion in the east was believed to imperil our Indian and Mediterranean rights, and France, whose governments seemed to have no consistency but adventure and whose quest after colonial compensation for lost European territory was causing Franco-British friction in North Africa. All the influence of the Crown was on the side of German friendship, and so was the inclination of the leading statesmen, Gladstone, Salisbury, Chamberlain. The dominant fashions among scholars—historians, philologists, philosophers, or theologians—were Teutonic: and something was due to an inherited popular anti-Gallicanism, and perhaps a little to memories of the Protestant hero and of Waterloo. A community, real or fancied, of religion reinforced the real or fancied community of race. Moreover, the British people at this time was very little interested in international relations: it was pre-occupied with urgent and profitable economic activities and with political problems unusually exigent and exciting: and there was a common belief that the tendency of civilization, the increasing complexity of commercial and financial arrangements, the improvement of morals and the spread of education (not unconnected with Free Trade, the Licensing Acts, the suppression of prize-fights, and the defeat of the militarist and light-minded French)—that all these things were working towards the impossibility of war, and that every postponement of war made its eventual outbreak less likely; that international relations in the past had commonly festered into war, and that therefore the less England had to do with

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international relations the better. Lastly, not all of that section of the British people which concerned itself with the state of Europe was wholly admirable, and it took some time before the snobbish worship of

tween the European powers: most of this distribution was effected in the 'eighties, the various governments alternately setting the pace; the German under the pressure of individual enthusiasts, the British for

the most part to defend the borders and communications of its existing possessions. Germany's share in this process was her debut as a colonial power, in which she was welcomed and assisted by the British government: it was not to be expected that the two governments could develop their spheres of interest, even in a continent so large as Africa, without some friction: but there was remarkably little, less than there was over the same subject between England and France.

At the same time, it was quite evident that Germany's colonies in Africa and the Pacific had been acquired and were held by the grace of the British navy. It may be true, as it is pleasant for the British to believe, that British naval predominance has been a blessing to the world, and especially that it has been hardly at all used for purposes of aggression or exclusion: but this is a view less generally taken abroad than at home.

This combination of facts

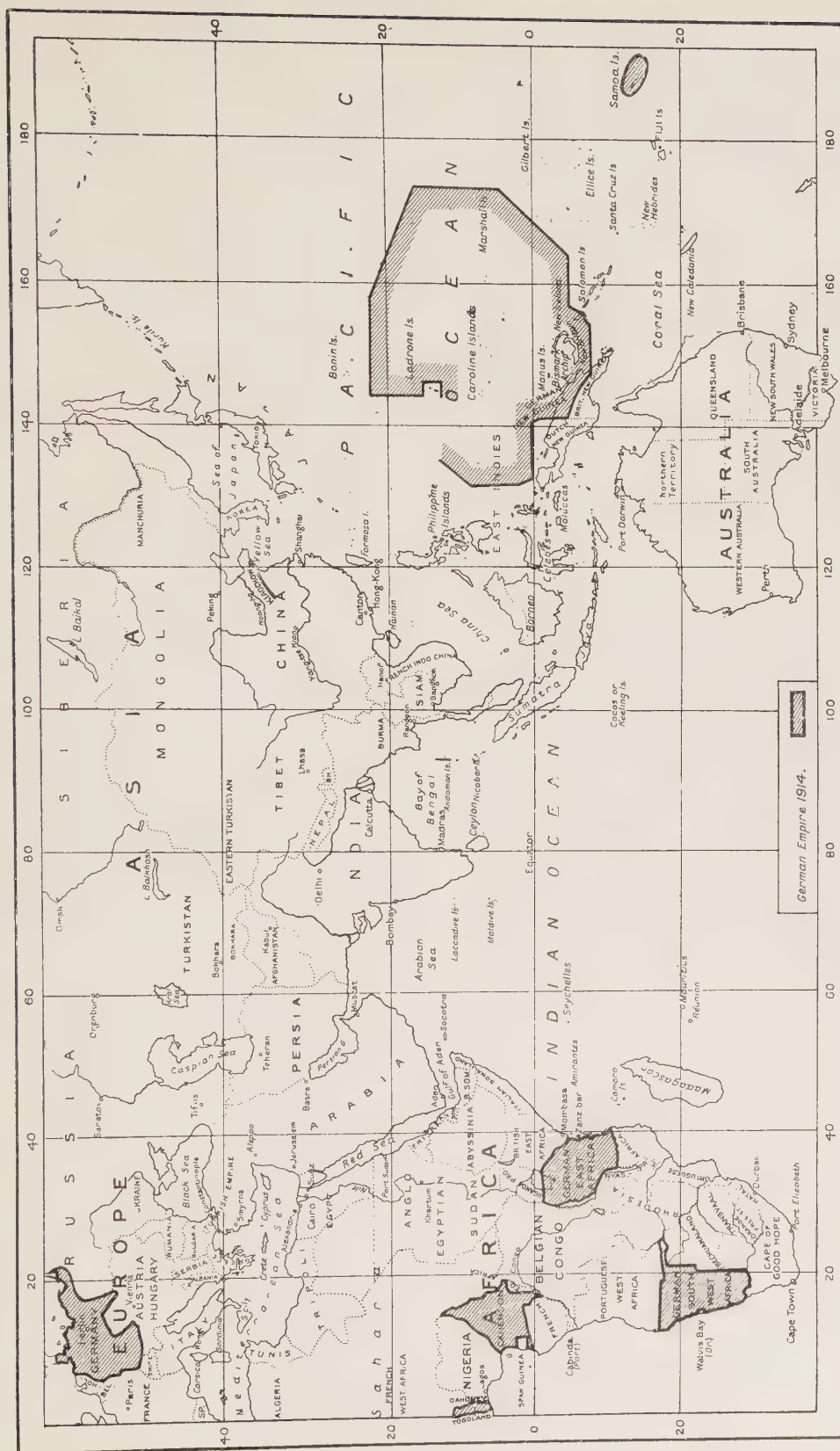


THE KAISER WILHELM

success was balanced by the timid dread of power: perhaps this would never have happened if Germany had not set herself to the acquisition of that sort of power which very few among the British could disinterestedly admire—sea-power.

In the generation which preceded the war almost all Africa was divided up be-

was of little moment so long as Germany was ruled by Bismarck, who had little care for overseas expansion, much less than for British friendship: but the case was altered by the middle of the 'nineties, when the Franco-Russian alliance, long foreshadowed, was a reality which divided Europe into two camps, and when new men, and especi-



THE GERMAN COLONIES. 1914

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

ally a new emperor, devoted themselves to a *Weltpolitik* which could have no reality without a naval basis. This interest in world-affairs was not slow in producing an ill effect on Anglo-German relations, especially in the instance of the Kaiser's telegram congratulating Kruger on the suppression of the Jameson raid, a gesture received with



ADMIRAL VON TIRPITZ
The "Father" of the German Navy.

From a Photograph by Bieber.

enthusiasm in Germany and with intense indignation in England. Moreover, the beginning of a series of assertions of German need of naval power coincided with a growing perception on this side of the North Sea that the immense development in German industry which had taken place and was still taking place was a challenge to British commerce and had in fact already undermined the unique position which it had enjoyed for a century. The natural effect of this coincidence was a progressive diminution of British complacency with regard to Germany's predominance in Europe and

a steadily increasing suspicion with regard to her designs abroad.

As early as 1896 the Kaiser was publicly proclaiming his conception of the German Empire as world-wide and depending on sea communications: and when the first efforts of his government to found a fleet capable of realizing this conception were frustrated by parliamentary opposition, he made no secret of his anger, nor of his determination to have the last word. His first success came in 1898 with the passing by Tirpitz, the maker of the German navy, of the first Navy Bill, which began the formation of a battle fleet, to be completed in seven years: and at the same time future success was much facilitated by the foundation and the prosperous development of a Navy League to persuade the German people of the necessity for the new departure.

Although there was a decline in general English sympathy and approval, there was as yet no change in the policy and intentions of the government. The British government still believed that its supreme interest was peace, and still thought it more likely that peace would be endangered by Russia or France, both now strengthened by their mutual alliance, than by any other power. The two-power standard had been established with a view to Russia and France. With Russia there were still causes of friction both in the near and in the further east; with France, African problems made it as difficult as ever for the British government to be friendly, and in 1898 Fashoda brought the two nations to the very verge of war, while the Russian acquisition of Port Arthur was nearly as serious for British relations with the other member of the Dual Alliance. In these circumstances Lord Salisbury's government looked about for support in the other European camp, and Mr. Chamberlain sounded the German ambassador on the subject of an alliance. The soundings never got so far as formal negotiations, the German government being unwilling to antagonize Russia, and the Kaiser confiding to the Tsar that the English "are now trying hard, so far as I can make out, to find a continental army to fight for their interests.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE GERMAN NAVY

But I fancy they won't easily find one—at least, not mine!"¹*

The inclination, however, to draw nearer to Germany was not destroyed, nor was it appreciably lessened by that power's veto on the discussion of armament limitation at the first Hague Conference, in 1899, nor by German sympathy (shared by most of Europe and to some extent neutralized by the Kaiser) with the Boers. Chamberlain asked publicly, as he had privately the year before, for a German alliance: "There is something more which I think any far-seeing English statesman must long have desired, and that is that we should not remain permanently isolated on the continent of Europe; and I think that the moment that aspiration was formed it must have appeared evident to everybody that the natural alliance is between ourselves and the German Empire. What interest have we which is contrary to the interest of Germany? . . . If the union between England and America is a powerful factor in the cause of peace, a new Triple Alliance between the Teutonic race and the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race will be a still more potent influence in the future of the world. I have used the word alliance, but it matters little whether you have an alliance which is committed to paper or whether you have an understanding which exists in the minds of the statesmen of the respective countries. An understanding is perhaps better than alliance."²

The Kaiser's "Strong Navy"

The public effort was as fruitless as the private one had been, but it was not yet to be the last: that was to come two years later, in 1901, but meanwhile events had happened which made success even less likely than before. A few weeks previous to Chamberlain's speech quoted in the foregoing paragraph, the Kaiser had made another of his attempts to impress upon his people the necessity for naval development: "Bitterly do we want a strong navy. Hamburg appreciates the absolute necessity for our foreign interests of a strong

protecting force and how indispensable it is to increase our fighting force at sea. Yet the realization of this need extends but slowly in our Fatherland, which unfortunately still wastes its strength in fruitless party strife."³

Passing of German Second Navy Bill

According to Admiral von Tirpitz's *Memoirs*, it was against the wishes of the political and naval authorities that this speech was delivered: its lesson was enforced, however, by a number of considerations, whose effectiveness was proved in 1900 by the passing of the second Navy Bill. There was the general political consideration of the indispensability of a fleet to world-power, a consideration made plain by recent history in Samoa, Manila, Fashoda and the Philippine Islands. There was the economic argument that Germany, with an expanding population already greater than her territory could support, was at the mercy not only of British attacks on trade routes but also of changes in British fiscal policy: risks which were emphasized by British searches of German ships in connexion with the Boer War, and by signs that in England Free Trade was ceasing to be a universally accepted dogma.

In the result the second Navy Bill was all that Admiral von Tirpitz desired, and it marked unmistakably the determination of Germany to be a great naval power, second only to England. The main features of this second bill were that it provided for the building of thirty-four battleships in sixteen years and that it removed the financial limit on their cost (on what proved the very easy condition of satisfying a parliamentary majority) by arranging that the naval budget should be annually fixed by the Reichstag. The preamble to the bill declared that its object was to make difficult any naval attack on Germany, even by the strongest naval power: that this was no under-estimate of the intention is shown by the report made by Admiral von Tirpitz to the Kaiser at the time: "Your majesty will have an effective force of thirty-eight ships of the line with their auxiliaries. This force will be only surpassed by England. But

* The references are given in Appendix I, at the end of the volume.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

our geographical position, military system, mobilization, torpedo boats, tactical training, the systematic organization of our construction and our unity of command offer us undoubtedly good prospects even against England. Apart from fighting con-

us such a measure of sea-power that our justifiable interests overseas will not suffer."

From the second Navy Bill may be dated the growth in England of a serious body of opinion which believed that German ambition was a danger to the British Empire,

and of another body, largely identical in composition and, though at first smaller, continually growing, which was convinced that the purview of practical politics included the outbreak within a foreseeable period of a European war, in which case the interests at least if not the forces of the British and German empires would be on opposite sides. Nevertheless, there was to be yet one more attempt at alliance. This grew out of Anglo-German co-operation in China, and broke down on the Wilhelmstrasse's demand of a promise of British help not only if Germany herself were attacked but even if she were forced to aid her allies. At the same time England did at last emerge from her isolation by the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. The treaty was signed in January, 1902, and provided that if the interests in the Far East of



AN UNDER-RATED MONSTER

Britannia: "That's a nasty-looking object, Mr. Boatman."

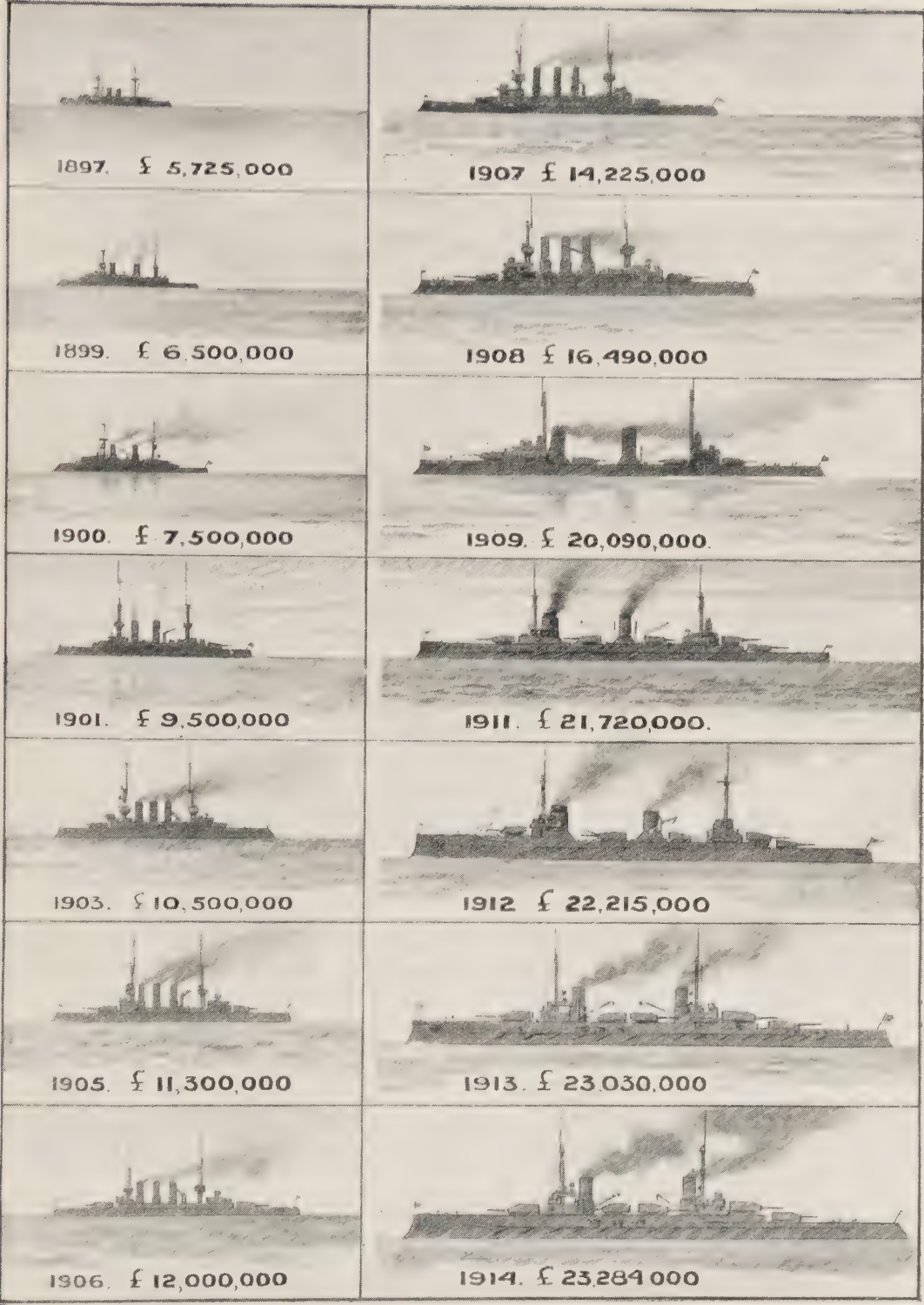
Lord Tw-dm-th: "Bless your 'eart, mum, 'e won't 'urt you. I've been 'ere, man an' boy, for the last six months, an' we don't take no account o' them things."

Reproduced from "Punch" (August 15th, 1906), by special permission of the Proprietors.

ditions, which are by no means hopeless for us, general political motives from the sober standpoint of the business man should destroy any inclination on the part of England to attack us, and lead her to allow

either power were attacked, then the other should remain neutral or, if the attack were launched by two powers, should assist its ally.

It will be remembered that Chamberlain



DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE EXPANSION OF THE GERMAN NAVY, 1897-1914—BASED ON ANNUAL EXPENDITURE

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

in 1899 had begun his demonstration of the advantages of a German alliance with the postulate that we "should not remain permanently isolated on the continent of Europe." Of the truth of this maxim British statesmen and a considerable section of effective public opinion had been all the more deeply convinced by subsequent events: nor did the Japanese treaty, however useful, meet the case. All the conditions were therefore present for a rapprochement between England and some other power: only France could be that power.

The Recovery of France

It has been already summarily indicated what were the forces in the late Victorian period which tended to draw us towards the German Empire and to keep us apart from the Third Republic. Those forces were now decaying, and by the end of the century this decay had gone fairly far. Some of the admiration previously felt for the triumph of Germany had been transferred to the recovery of France. The Boulanger episode had threatened to confirm British belief in French militarism and flightiness: when that flamboyant general flickered out, it became possible to regard the republic as a serious institution. The Dreyfus case shook the foundations both of the French government and of its reputation in the world: but the foundations stood, and after the withstanding of that shock the Third Republic could be regarded as the most stable of French governments since the old regime. In other ways also France had acquired merit. The period immediately following Sedan, with, on the one hand, its sense of depression and inferiority, and on the other its violent and exasperated nationalism, had been succeeded by a mood at once quieter and stronger: an improvement attributable partly to the growing-up of a new generation, but more to the confidence engendered by increased prosperity in colonial enterprise, by the survival and apparent solidifying of the republic, and by the securing of the powerful Russian alliance. From the British point of view, it was true that the first and third of these causes for congratulation were

causes also of some friction. French ambitions in North Africa had been especially troublesome in this regard, and Fashoda had been both an annoyance for England and a humiliation for France: but it was the darkest hour before the dawn, for it convinced France that it was no use disputing British overlordship of the Nile, and Delcassé that there was wisdom in cultivating British friendship, a view till then held by Clemenceau alone among French politicians.

Nor was Delcassé's conversion the only personal change which affected the situation: the accession of King Edward VII meant that royal pressure would no longer be inevitably on the side of Germany in any choice between that country and France: and, what was even more important, among the mass of ordinary citizens there was a continuous diminution of German sympathies. This change of feeling had many causes, of widely differing degrees of respectability. Partly it was due to resentment of a successful competitor, exacerbated by a natural irritation at the frequently alleged German superiority in diligence: partly to a just perception that British prosperity depended on communications in an infinitely greater degree than that of any other nation, and to a consequent desire that no other naval power should be comparable with ours, and willingness to co-operate with any state which had its own reasons for being watchful of our nearest naval competitor: partly to untoward incidents such as the Kruger telegram and German action at the Hague Conference; partly to personal dislike, as between British and German soldiers on the Boxer expedition and between British and German merchant seamen and commercial agents all over the world: partly to the beginning of a reaction against the previous generation's fashion of Teutonism and perhaps also to a decline in self-conscious protestantism and self-confident puritanism.

Britain Inclined towards France

For all these reasons the British people was by the turn of the century prepared to acquiesce if its rulers should decide to co-operate with France in European affairs: repeated failures of attempts at alliance

COMING OF THE *ENTENTE CORDIALE*

with Germany convinced the rulers that some such co-operation was necessary, and in 1903 it began, to continue with increasing intensity down to the time when it became absolute, or at least as nearly absolute as co-operation between states ever is. It was initiated with an exchange of visits between King Edward and President Loubet, and with a convention for the reference to the Hague Court of differences between the two countries: the next year it was extended by an accommodation of all outstanding differences in North Africa and Newfoundland. It was temporarily endangered by the dispute between England and Russia over the shelling of Hull fishing-boats in the North Sea by an excited and incompetent admiral on his way to fight the Japanese: and the Franco-Russian alliance itself was threatened a little later (July, 1905) by the pact of Björkö, under which the Kaiser and the Tsar promised to help each other with all their forces against any attack: but this agreement was denounced by the Tsar's ministers as soon as it was disclosed to them. For one moment the Kaiser had imagined himself at the head of a "continental combine" of Germany, France, and Russia, flanked by America, seeing in that arrangement "the sole manner effectively to block the way to the whole world becoming John Bull's private property, which he exploits to his heart's content after having, by lies and intrigues without end, set the rest of the civilized nations by the ears for his own personal benefit."⁴

The Algeiras Conference, and After

This vision was even more transitory than most such vain imaginings, and its insubstantiality was even more than usually emphasized by the prolonged controversy over Morocco which ended, for a time, at the Algeiras Conference of 1906, where French diplomacy was supported against that of Germany by Russia and England, and even by Spain and the United States. This diplomatic co-operation between France and England was not the only development of the policy initiated with the mutual courtesies and the arbitration convention of 1903. In December, 1905, Sir Henry

Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal who had succeeded Mr. Balfour as prime minister, publicly proclaimed his adhesion to the policy of the *entente cordiale*, adding, indeed, "As regards Russia, we have nothing but good feeling towards that great people. In the case of Germany also I see no cause whatever of estrangement in any of the interests of either people." No doubt other observers, more suspicious or more perspicacious than the prime minister, were less confident of the absence of causes of estrangement: but certainly there was no influential section of British opinion which welcomed or wished to add to such causes, and it remained till the very eve of war the constant desire of the government to diminish and if possible altogether to remove them. The new government accepted the principle of an understanding with France as fully as, but in a spirit no more aggressive nor exclusive than, its predecessor had done, and it was led from the very beginning, and increasingly, to apply and extend that principle.

Military Co-operation with France

The first such application was made almost as soon as the new government was in power: Sir Edward Grey authorized the naval and military staffs of the two countries to consult together and to arrange for joint action in case of attack by Germany, but at the same time he warned the French government that such arrangements between the staffs must not be supposed to bind their governments and that British support would be forthcoming only if it were desired by British public opinion, which he believed would have been the case if war had been forced upon France on the question of Morocco.

Mr. Haldane, the secretary of State for war, was consulted by Sir Edward Grey and the prime minister, and was so much impressed with the importance and urgency of the question of military co-operation that he at once put to the general staff the problem, "how to mobilize and concentrate, at a place of assembly to be opposite the Belgian frontier, a force calculated as adequate (with the assistance of Russian

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

pressure in the East) to make up for the inadequacy of the French armies for their great task of defending the entire French frontier from Dunkirk down to Belfort, or even further south, if Italy should join the Triple Alliance in an attack.”⁵

It is noteworthy that in the semi-official conversation which preceded the authorization of consultation between the staffs,



ADMIRAL SIR JOHN (AFTERWARDS LORD) FISHER

Who predicted in 1905 that war with Germany would occur in August, 1914, and advised the immediate seizure of the German navy.

From a Photograph by Beresford.

the French reply to a question whether they realized that any violation of Belgian neutrality brought us into the field automatically in defence of our treaty obligations was, “*La France l’a toujours supposé, mais n’en a jamais eu l’assurance officielle.*”

Meanwhile the naval rivalry between England and Germany which had been foreshadowed by the Navy Bill of 1900 had become a reality of ever-increasing seriousness. As a dozen years before it was from France and Russia that danger was anticipated, so now it was from Germany. In

1905 Sir John Fisher, then first sea lord, predicted that war would come in August, 1914, and wanted to anticipate it by seizing the German fleet at once, on the model of Canning’s Copenhagen policy in 1807. No such plan was or could be entertained, but Fisher’s designing of the Dreadnought class of battleship (of which the first was launched in February, 1906) made previous types obsolete and lengthened the period during which the German navy would be hopelessly inferior to the British; while Rosyth was chosen as a base for operations in the North Sea. The Liberal government adopted in the naval estimates of 1906 the policy of its predecessor, but without prejudice and subject to revision, and the secretary of the admiralty finished his speech by quoting the prime minister’s declaration that the growth of huge armaments was a threat to the peace of the world, and his recommendation that this nation should place itself at the head of a League of Peace. In the autumn Mr. Haldane told the Kaiser that the two-power standard must be maintained as firmly by a Liberal as by a Conservative government, and “that our policy for the present was strongly for Free Trade, so that the more Germany exported to Great Britain and British possessions, the more we should export in exchange to them.”⁶

These amiable interchanges did not affect the German government’s determination to prevent the discussion of disarmament at the approaching Hague Conference. The Kaiser had told Sir Frank Lascelles that if the question were to be brought up he should refuse to be represented. Herr von Tschirschky, the foreign minister, vainly tried to persuade Mr. Haldane to take some of the odium of refusal off German shoulders, but in effect it was the British plenipotentiary who mooted the question, and it was promptly shelved, with polite expressions from most powers and chiefly as a result of the attitude taken by Germany.

In 1907 the concentration of the battle fleet in home waters was completed, and in the debate on the navy estimates the government explicitly pledged itself to the two-power standard; but in this and the following years there was a good deal of opposition

THE LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS

suspicion of its absolute loyalty to that shibboleth, and a good deal of pressure from its own supporters for further reductions of the estimates. With the latter the government had this much sympathy, that it was anxious for economy, that it believed that peace would be subserved by a restriction of armaments, and that it considered, in the words of Mr. Asquith, that "some combinations of powers formerly apprehended were now highly improbable, and the German and British peoples were advancing towards a complete mutual understanding." In consideration of the same arguments and of the recent convention arranging Anglo-Russian differences in Asia, it had been found possible to cut down military expenditure; and in August, 1908, the German government was approached with a view to friendly discussions of the limitation of naval armament, but the Kaiser replied that no such discussion with a foreign government could be tolerated.

The years between Algiers and Agadir form a period of German dominance in European relations and of disquiet and exasperation in British politics. On the larger stage the most striking incident was Austria's success in tearing up the Treaty of Berlin and annexing Bosnia, a success rendered possible by the assistance of Germany "in shining armour": but the very use which the Central Powers were making of their predominant position was bringing that position into danger, notably by inspiring Russia with resentment and inducing her to settle

her differences with England and to tighten her bonds with Austria's unforgiving victim Serbia, and by emphasizing the hollowness of the Triple Alliance with respect to Italy and Austria.

In England the same period was marked



H.M.S. *DREADNOUGHT* (1906)

Designed by Sir John Fisher, this fighting ship outclassed every other in the world, and became the forerunner of an entirely new type.

From a Photograph by Stephen Cribb.

by an increasing violence and intolerance in domestic politics, as exemplified in the use of arson and assault by the advocates of women's suffrage, in the emergence for the first time for nearly a century of a fundamental constitutional controversy over "the People's Budget," and in the consequent alliance of the Liberal government

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with the Irish nationalists, in the Osborne judgment and the polemics and legislation about trade union rights which followed it, and in the social antagonisms produced or at least emphasized by Mr. Lloyd George's budget and insurance proposals : but it was

by what they regarded as unsoundness on the two-power standard and by the reduction of the regular army, which had been one of Mr. Haldane's earliest feats on taking over the war office.

In all these matters agitation was continually on the increase : Lord Roberts was preaching universal military service and using the possibility of German invasion as a stock argument ; the play "An Englishman's Home" stimulated popular discussion of the same subject : the incident of the letter on naval policy addressed by the Kaiser to the first lord of the admiralty just before the introduction of the naval estimates of 1908 had a disturbing effect which was not soon forgotten ; nor was the interest taken in the subject diminished by the opposition's reasonable suspicion that it was one on which cabinet opinion was far from unanimous.

Apart from any possible controversy over the reduction of the regular establishment and the substitution for the militia of the special reserve, it cannot be disputed that Mr. Haldane's administration largely contributed to the cause of military preparedness : he pushed on to completion the organization of a general staff, begun by his predecessor ; he reorganized the professional army in such a way that, as will be seen, it could provide in a shorter time a greater effective force than had previously been available ; and he transformed the volunteers into a territorial army, certainly more efficient

and far better adapted for expansion. All this was something : it may be that all this was much less than should have been done in the threatening state of Europe ; or, on the other hand, that it was quite all that could be done in the highly contentious but bitterly anti-militarist mood then prevalent in Britain : further discussions of these questions must be postponed.

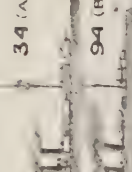
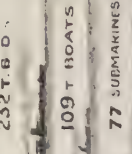
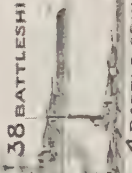
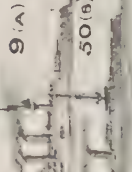
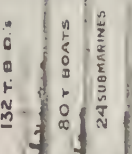
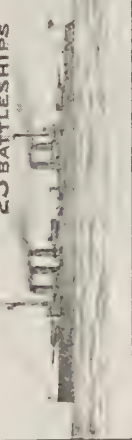
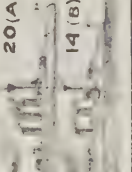
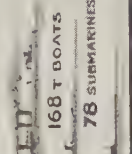
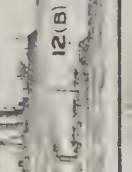
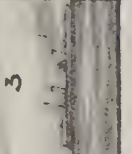
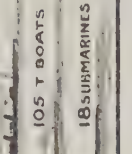
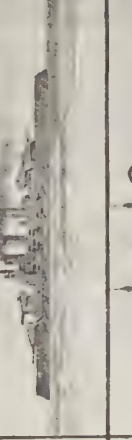
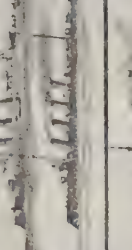
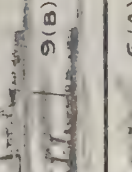
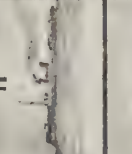
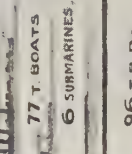
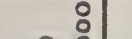
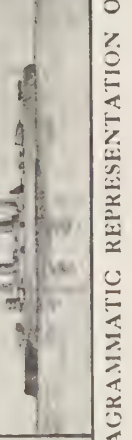
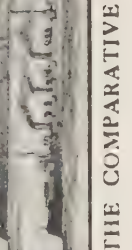
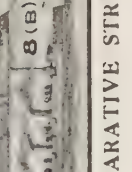
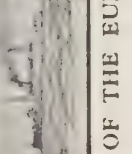
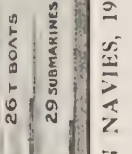
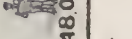
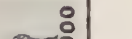


LORD ROBERTS

The later years of whose life were devoted to the advocacy of universal military service.

From a Photograph by the London News Agency.

notable no less for the increasing interest shown, notwithstanding these distractions, in questions of imperial defence. A large proportion of those who especially concerned themselves with these matters had been frightened by the accession to power of a party among whose most cherished traditions was the limitation of expenditure on armaments. Their fears had been intensified

YEAR 1914	BATTLESHIPS and BATTLE CRUISERS	ARMoured CRUISERS : (A) LIGHT ARMoured PROTECTED AND UNPROTECTED CRUISERS. (B)	MINESWEEPERS AND SUBMARINE CHASERS	SCOUTS	TORPEDO VESSELS.	TORPEDO BOAT DESTROYERS TORPEDO BOATS SUBMARINES	PERSONNEL
BRITISH EMPIRE (1 st)	60 BATTLESHIPS  9 BATTLE CRUISERS 	34 (A)  94 (B) 	—	8	15 	232 T. B. D.'s  109 T. BOATS  77 SUBMARINES 	151,000
GERMANY (2 nd)	38 BATTLESHIPS  4 BATTLE CRUISERS 	9 (A)  50 (B) 	—	—	—	132 T. B. D.'s  80 T. BOATS  24 SUBMARINES 	72,895
FRANCE (5 th)	23 BATTLESHIPS 	20 (A)  14 (B) 	4	—	4 	74 T. B. D.'s  168 T. BOATS  78 SUBMARINES 	63,600
ITALY (6 th)	12 BATTLESHIPS 	9 (A)  12 (B) 	—	1	3 	33 T. B. D.'s  105 T. BOATS  18 SUBMARINES 	36,000
AUSTRIA HUNGARY (7 th)	14 BATTLESHIPS 	3 (A)  9 (B) 	—	—	11 	12 T. B. D.'s  77 T. BOATS  6 SUBMARINES 	27,000
RUSSIA (8 th)	9 BATTLESHIPS 	6 (A)  8 (B) 	—	—	3 	96 T. B. D.'s  26 T. BOATS  29 SUBMARINES 	48,000

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS OF THE EUROPEAN NAVIES, 1914

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The policy and administration of the war office were in fact less vital, and in general estimation incomparably less vital, than those of the admiralty. In this connexion the crucial event was the passing of the navy estimates for 1909. For the first time details of German construction were invoked to explain and defend British plans: there was strong Radical pressure in the House of



RT. HON. REGINALD MCKENNA

As First Lord of the Admiralty in 1909 he insisted on a naval programme which ensured the provision of thirty capital ships in 1913, as against Germany's estimated twenty-one.

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

Commons, and even in the cabinet, to cut down the number of ships, but Mr. McKenna (who had succeeded Lord Tweedmouth as first lord of the admiralty), strongly supported by the foreign secretary, successfully insisted upon a programme designed to keep the British navy "supreme as against any foreign navy and any probable combination which we might have to meet single-handed," and specifically to provide it with thirty capital ships in 1913, as against Germany's twenty-one.

In July, 1909, Prince Bülow was succeeded

as chancellor of the German Empire by Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, who at once approached the British government with a view to agreement about naval construction. His offer was vague: Germany was not to reduce the number of ships to be completed by 1918, but she was to retard the rate of building in the first part of the intervening period and proportionately to accelerate it towards the end: in return for this questionable advantage (which could not safely have led to any considerable decrease in naval expenditure), "Great Britain was to be party to an agreement declaring that (1) neither country had any idea of aggression, and that neither would, in fact, attack the other; and (2) that in the event of an attack made on either power by a third power or group of powers, the power not attacked should stand aside." It is not necessary to believe that Bethmann was actuated by any sinister motive, and it is certain that his foreign secretary, Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter, was a sincere disbeliever in the policy of naval expansion; but it will be seen that the suggested agreement would have kept Britain out of a struggle between Germany and Austria on the one side and France and Russia on the other on the easy condition that the inception of hostilities should rest with Austria. It is not surprising, therefore, that the British government rejected these proposals. This was not the end, however, of negotiations on this subject, which fruitlessly continued, with a great deal of delay and ambiguity on the German side, until they were interrupted by the sending of the *Panther* to Agadir.

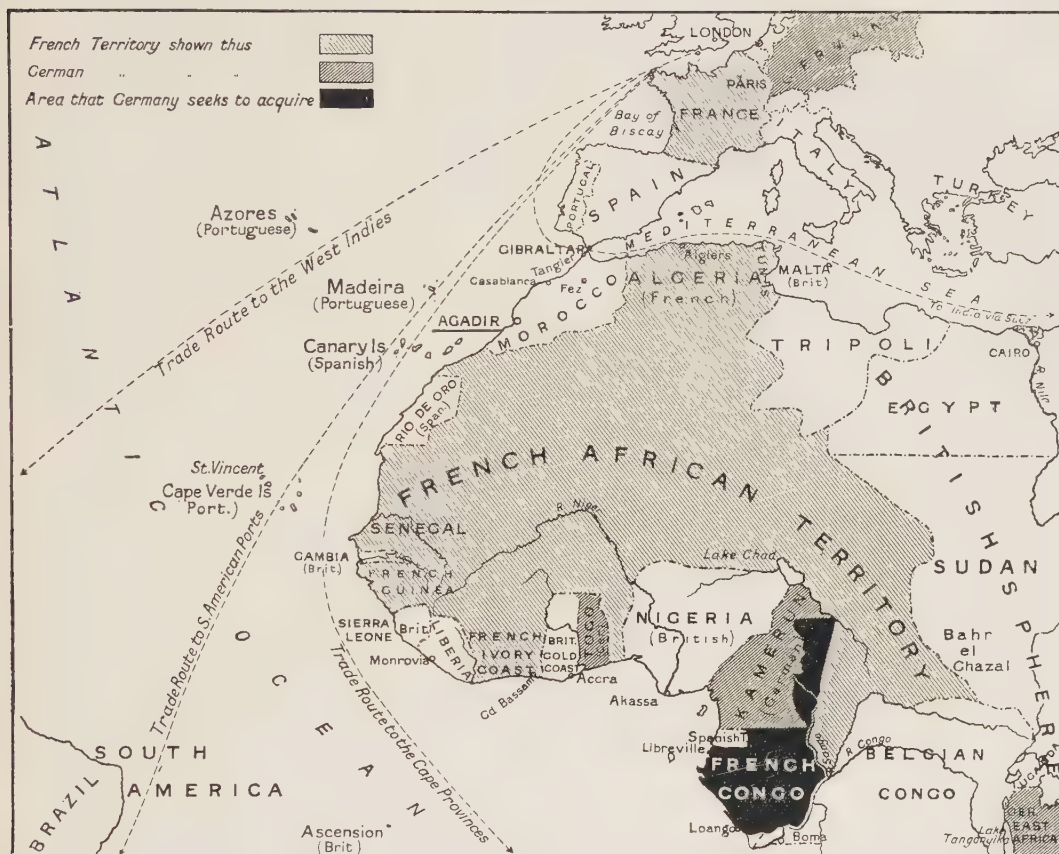
How the *Panther* came to be sent to Agadir cannot be discussed here: it is enough to say that its dispatch marked the crisis in Franco-German rivalries over Africa, rivalries which only just failed to kindle into war. That failure was not unaffected by British action; and there lies the interest of the matter for our purpose—a twofold interest, in the government's policy of warning Germany and in the reaction of parties to the policy.

The spokesman of the government on this occasion was the chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, whose intervention was

LLOYD GEORGE'S AGADIR SPEECH

all the more impressive because it was the first sign he had ever given of concern with foreign affairs, and because he had been commonly regarded as germanophil and pacifist. The gist of what he said was as follows: he "advocated the pacific settlement of international disputes by arbi-

would make great sacrifices to preserve peace ; but if a situation were to be forced on Britain in which peace could only be preserved by surrender of the great and beneficent position won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing her to be treated where her interests were vitally affected as if she



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AGADIR

The dispatch of the German warship *Panther* to Agadir in July, 1911, nearly precipitated war between France and Germany. The outspoken warning of Mr. Lloyd George as to Britain's attitude undoubtedly greatly influenced the withdrawal of Germany's claims.

By courtesy of the Proprietors of the "Graphic."

tration, but declared it essential to the highest interests of the world that Great Britain should at all hazards maintain her place and her prestige among the great powers. Her potent influence had often been invaluable to the cause of human liberty; it had more than once redeemed continental nations from overwhelming disaster, and even national extinction. He

were of no account in the cabinet of nations, peace at that price would be an intolerable humiliation. National honour and the security of British international trade were not party questions. The peace of the world was much more likely to be secured if all nations realized its necessary conditions; and he was convinced that nations were beginning to understand each other better and

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to be more ready to discuss their differences calmly.' ' 7

This declaration had not been previously authorized by the cabinet, but it was justly and inevitably taken as the authentic voice of the government: it meant quite clearly that England would fight to prevent Germany using force or the threat of force to make what England considered unfair demands on France, or to provide herself with maritime bases without English consent: this was regarded in Germany as proof that England had ranged herself on the side of France to frustrate legitimate German ambitions in world politics. No less important was the reassertion of the principle that in British politics foreign policy was above party, a reassertion with which Mr. Balfour and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald took the first parliamentary opportunity of associating themselves. Mr. MacDonald added, indeed, that the Labour parties in Great Britain, France, and Germany would stand together for peace, and expressed regret at Mr. Lloyd George's speech. But it was not yet (and has not since become) clear exactly what was meant by standing together for peace, and it was already obvious that British labour was not unanimous on the point: two of the most respected and popular, if not most influential, Socialists, Mr. Hyndman and Mr. Blatchford, were taking leading parts in the developing campaign to persuade the public of the probability of war with Germany and of the necessity of preparing for it.

Effect of Mr. Lloyd George's Speech

It cannot be denied that the immediate effect of Mr. Lloyd George's speech was a violent and sudden rise in the diplomatic temperature, but it is almost equally certain that it contributed to the reduction of German demands, and consequently to the peaceful settlement of the Moroccan difficulty: it left, however, a deep feeling of bitterness in Germany, and throughout Europe a conviction that England was definitely ranged with the Dual against the Triple Alliance.

It may have been only with a view to removing the bitterness, and it is therefore un-

necessary to suppose that it was with the less unexceptionable object of detaching England from the Entente, that early in 1912 the British cabinet was invited to send one of its number to Berlin to discuss ways and means of improving Anglo-German relations.

Britain's Domestic Difficulties

The cabinet had consistently shown its anxiety to settle all outstanding disputes with Germany and in general to be a calming agent in European councils, and, in the course of the two and a half years that remained to it before the great disaster, was faithful to that excellent intention, notably in the long series of negotiations over Balkan and Near Eastern problems. Moreover, it had other cogent reasons, of a less elevated kind than the disinterested virtue of the peacemaker, for ardently desiring European tranquillity: it was quite sufficiently occupied with domestic affairs—social legislation which, however well-intentioned and even wise, was importing a new venom into English controversy, an assault going to the foundations of British government on one of the houses of parliament, the preservation of civilized government against the inconsequent but organized violence of women suffragists, the almost certain prospect of civil war in Ireland, the growing claims of a continually expanding trade unionism, and half a dozen other questions which would have been of first-rate importance in ordinary times. A large section of its supporters was so little interested in national defence that it habitually found all expenditure on that object excessive, or so firmly convinced of the efficacy of good intentions as to believe that if only England had an honest enough desire for peace she would always obtain it with honour and profit. This section had as a result of Mr. Lloyd George's Agadir speech definitely become the less influential section in the cabinet, but it was still strong outside; moreover, naval expenditure was undeniably approaching the limits of the tolerable, and any reduction consistent with security would be a boon both absolute and obvious, a rare coincidence of beneficent statesmanship with partisan advantage.

HALDANE'S MISSION TO GERMANY

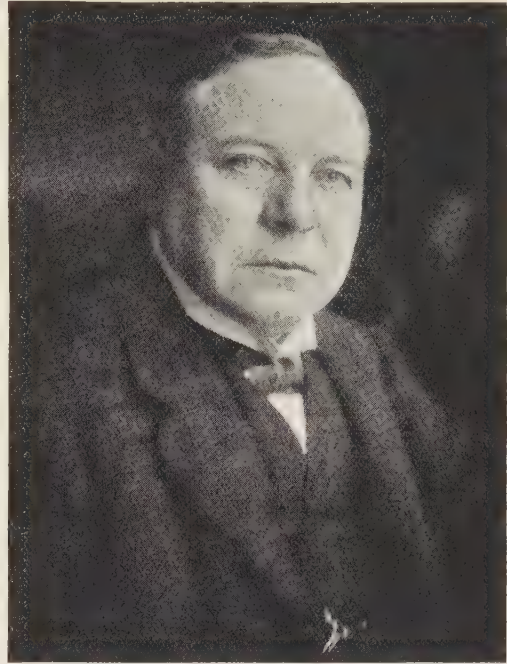
For all these reasons the cabinet welcomed the German invitation and selected as its spokesman Mr. Haldane, who was recommended by a unique combination of qualities—a knowledge of German, “Liberal Imperialist” opinions, the confidence of his Radical colleagues, and the favour of the Kaiser. He went not as a plenipotentiary, to make and to receive promises, but merely to explain the views of his own government and to learn the views of his hosts, so that on a basis of mutual knowledge differences might be arranged and co-operation prepared.

The mission was a failure: the principal British desideratum was a reduction in expenditure on armaments, and the Germans, as before, would offer not an absolute diminution of naval construction but only a temporary retardation; even so, this retardation was to be dependent on a general political agreement, and here was the fatal stumbling-block.

The agreement which Bethmann desired was to the effect that neither power should join any combination, even defensive, against the other, and that if either “became entangled in a war with one or more other powers, the other . . . will at least observe towards the power so entangled a benevolent neutrality”: this “precluded us from coming to the assistance of France should Germany attack her and aim at getting possession of such ports as Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne, a friendly occupation of which was so important for our island security. Difficulties might also arise which would hamper us in the discharge of our existing treaty obligations to Belgium, Portugal, and Japan.”⁸ In short, the German chancellor was asking Britain to perform an unexampled feat of self-mutilation by voluntarily depriving herself of all significance in international politics.

This suggestion and its inevitable refusal were immediately preceded and succeeded by other portents of a disturbing nature: Italy's seizure of Tripoli and war with Turkey increased existing doubts as to the reality of the Triple Alliance, and doubled the anxieties of the Central Powers over what they regarded as their legitimate rights of reversion in case of any resettlement of

the Balkans or rearrangement of Turkish territory or resources: the German *Novelle*, or supplementary Navy Bill, considerably increased the striking force of their fleet and put a larger proportion of it into continuous readiness for action: the formation of the Balkan League under the patronage of Russia and its defeat of Turkey failed, thanks to the pacific action not only of Britain



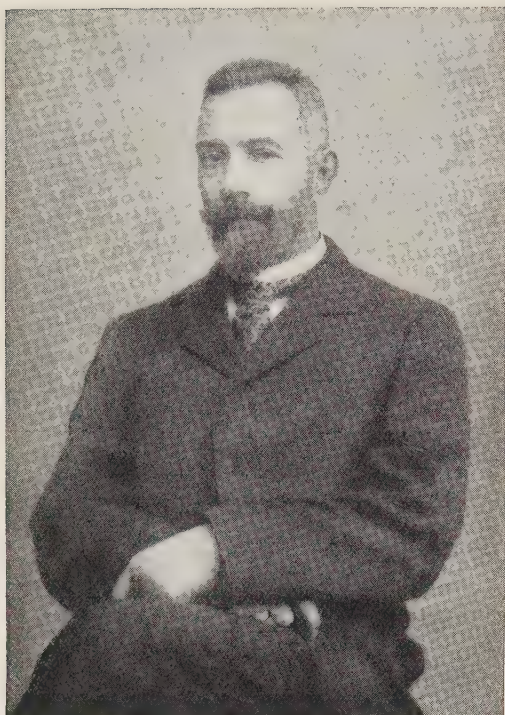
RT. HON. R. B. (AFTERWARDS LORD) HALDANE

His administration at the War Office secured an efficient General Staff, the establishment of the Territorial Army, and the organization of a mobile Expeditionary Force.

From a Photograph by Reginald Haines.

but also of both France and Germany, to result in a general European war, but left in the minds of the German and Austrian governments a conviction that it was impossible long to postpone the decisive conflict between Teuton and Slav, and that it was probable that in such a conflict Britain and France would support the Slav, and that Italy would be at the best a very ineffective ally to the Teuton, who was therefore all the more bound to strengthen his connexion with the Turk and to seek other allies (Bulgaria and Rumania) in the

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DR. VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG

The German Chancellor who proposed the impracticable retardation of naval expansion, and later gave expression to the famous "scrap of paper" phrase.

Balkans. All these considerations enormously strengthened the parties in Germany which wanted war, or held that war was inevitable and therefore that it should be begun as soon as convenient and exploited as fully as possible. The militarist parties were strengthened in France and Russia also, but not to the same extent and with nothing like the same effect.

In Germany the effect was immediate, specific, and undeniable: the army, slightly increased in 1912, in 1913 received another 170,000 men: on the advice of General Ludendorff a capital levy of fifty millions was raised, to be divided among artillery, fortifications, and the gold reserve: British invitations to a naval holiday were ignored or declined: Liman von Sanders was sent to be inspector-general of the Turkish army, a strengthening of the German-Turkish connexion which irritated Russia and quickened her resolve to be heir to Constantinople whenever there should be a question of succession.

What meaning there is, if any, in speaking of the inevitability of a war or of any other human event may be doubted: of the European war it has been shown that it was an eventuality which had been foreseen and discussed for years, and that in the last four years before it became a reality its probability and the enormous gain of defeating that probability were alike becoming constantly more apparent. How was Britain prepared to meet this menace?

British policy was not altered but merely confirmed by the increasing tension of international relations. Mr. Haldane and his successor at the war office continued the development of a general staff, the preparation of an expeditionary force of small size by continental standards but intensively trained and ready for immediate use, and the recruiting and education of the territorials for home defence, and began in a very small way (according to some critics a ridiculously small way) the formation of an air force; but they resolutely refused all suggestions of further military expansion, especially those based on compulsion.

No less important than actual military organization and training was the con-



GENERAL LUDENDORFF

The organizer of Germany's great armies.

1896-97
TOTAL HORSES
97,378



TOTAL INCREASE OF
HORSES 62,714

1914
TOTAL HORSES
160,092

1896
Pioneers etc.
34,452 Men
(23 Battalions Pioneers,
3 Railway Regts, 2 Balloon
Detachments, 21 Battalions
Train, and other details)
4,185 Horses.

PIONEERS AND OTHER DETAILS
INCREASE 41,366

1914
Pioneers etc.
75,818 Men
(35 Battalions Pioneers,
Rly., Telegraph and Balloon
Units, 26 Battalions Train,
and other details)
12,167 Horses.

1896
Artillery
85,626 Men
(43 Regts Field
17 " Foot)
Horses 29,081

ARTILLERY
INCREASE 44,099

1914
Artillery
129,725 Men
(100 Regts Field
26 " Foot)
Horses 61,153

PIONEERS,
RAILWAY,
TELEGRAPH,
TRAIN ETC.

ARTILLERY
(FIELD AND FOOT)

PIONEERS AND
OTHER DETAILS

ARTILLERY
(FIELD AND FOOT)

CAVALRY

TOTAL
INFANTRY

1896
Cavalry
68,554 Men
(93 Regiments)
64,112 Horses



CAVALRY
INCREASE 17,238

1914
Cavalry
85,792 Men
(110 Regiments)
80,554 Horses

CAVALRY

ARMY AVIATION
211 Monoplanes
264 Biplanes
200 Aviators

TOTAL
INFANTRY
(including 200
Army Aviators)

1896
Total Infantry
396,262 Men
(173 Regiments Infantry,
19 Battalions Rifles
and other details)



INFANTRY
INCREASE 118,724

1914
Total Infantry
514,986 Men
(217 Regiments Infantry,
18 Battalions Rifles,
27 Machine Gun Sections,
317 District Headquarters)

PEACE TOTAL
FOR 1896-97.

584,894 MEN

PEACE TOTAL
FOR 1914

806,521 MEN

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE EXPANSION OF THE GERMAN
ARMY, 1896-1914

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sideration of war as an intellectual and an imperial problem: this task was performed by two bodies, both already existent but both rapidly growing in importance by the very fact of performing such important work. These two bodies, the Committee of Imperial Defence and the Imperial Conference, were both exclusively consultative in function, entirely without any right of decision or administration, yet their discussions influenced in the highest degree the resources and dispositions with which the British people was to meet the shock of war. It was the former body which worked out the strategy on which the war office based its plans, leaving home defence to the navy and the territorials and designing the regular army for more distant needs and for the immediate provision in emergency of an expeditionary force based on England: it considered also the naval position and the possibilities of blockade and some smaller matters such as censorship and the control of cables. At the imperial conferences ministers of the dominions were informed of the policy and strategy adopted by the home government, arrangements were made for staff co-operation and for uniformity of military training, and for naval contributions from various dominions; and a beginning of a common foreign policy was made when (in 1911) five dominion prime ministers agreed beforehand to the prolongation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Moreover, the two bodies were brought into permanent connexion, and something like continuity was given to imperial consultation by an agreement that representatives of dominion governments should be invited to the Committee of Imperial Defence when naval and military questions affecting them were under consideration.

Churchill's Policy at the Admiralty

At the admiralty Mr. Churchill perforce framed the estimates with a view to the *Novelle*, but he promised to follow in full proportion any diminution in German ship-building and, further, to drop construction altogether for any year in which Germany would do the same. This offer received no welcome, either because its sincerity was

doubted or because it was taken (as it justly might have been) as evidence that the race of armaments was severely testing the endurance of the British government. Mr. Churchill had also begun the creation of a naval war staff. In another direction admiralty necessities dictated a decision of high policy. To meet the strength of the German navy it was desired to concentrate our main naval forces in home waters, and for this purpose to withdraw all battleships from the Mediterranean. It was accordingly arranged that the French fleet should be concentrated in that sea, and that between Sir Edward Grey and the French ambassador a "mutual assurance should be placed on record in two letters to the effect that, if events of a nature to disturb European peace ever occurred, the two governments would immediately place themselves in relation the one with the other, and consider together the steps to be taken." This assurance implied no absolute obligation of mutual assistance: as Monsieur Poincaré comments, "the British cabinet did not feel itself able to contract a positive engagement without parliamentary sanction."⁹ It had bound itself, however, to consult with the French government in any case where war should be imminent, and it had enabled the French to leave the Channel undefended so long as they felt sure to be engaged in no war in which they would not be able to count on British assistance; and in return it had received a corresponding freedom with regard to the Mediterranean.

Britain's Attitude to Germany

If with France the policy of co-operation was thus maintained and emphasized, so with Germany was the policy of removing causes of friction and multiplying cases of complacency: how successfully over the weary series of Balkan crises the German foreign secretary eloquently testified. Another success, over the Bagdad railway, was on the point of completion when Anglo-German relations were interrupted by war.

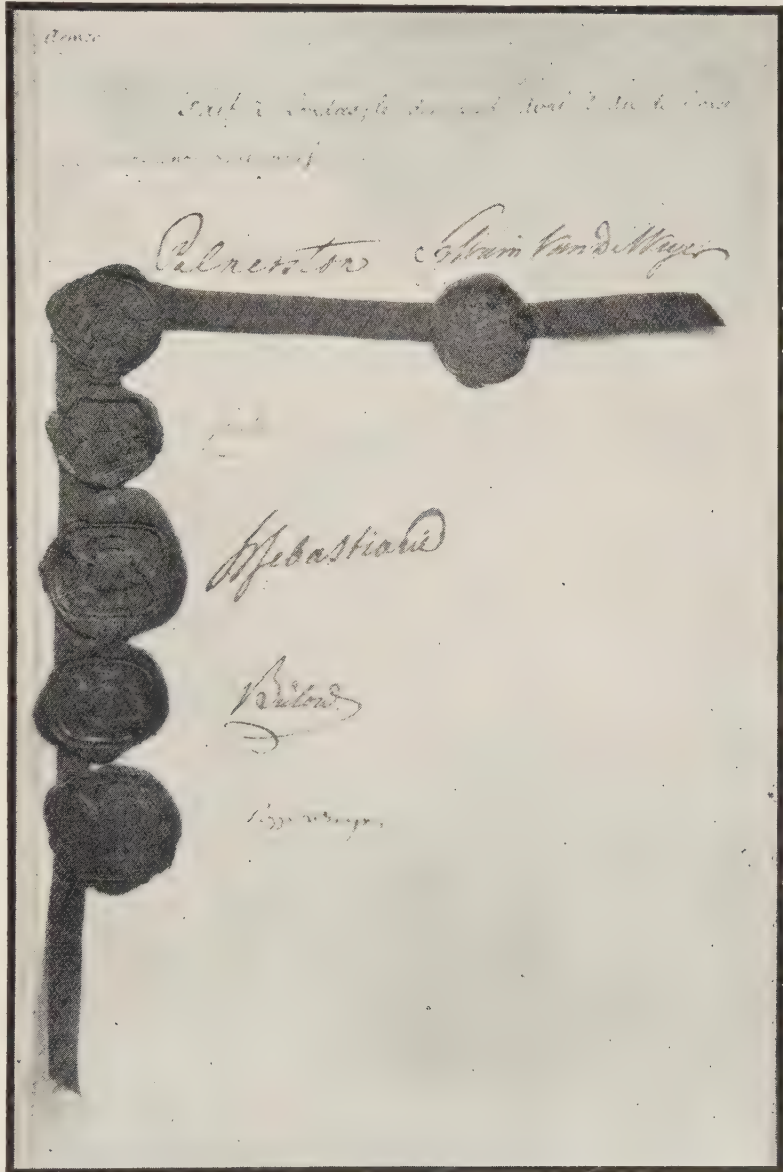
That the policy above outlined failed to avert war when the next European crisis was precipitated by the Sarajevo murders no one is likely to forget: nor is it doubtful

POSITION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN BRITAIN

that the British government was aware of the possibility of this failure, and that, though it may honestly boast itself to have been prepared for the consequences of such failure, yet it would have been more admirable if it had been even better prepared. It has been argued that the conditions of British politics at this time were such that better preparation was impossible: this argument deserves some consideration.

Some indication has already been given of the preoccupations whose effect was to leave comparatively little of the attention of politicians, and much less of public attention, to international politics and national defence. This inattention was both cause and effect of a manifold division of public opinion, a division that was deep and patent but did not (as such things commonly do) provide its own remedy because it did not give, nor, in spite of some years of unresting controversy, seem likely to give, a really effective preponderance to any one section. The Liberals, who were responsible for policy and administration, depended for control of the House of Commons on extraneous support from the Irish and the Labour parties: of these, the

Irish party was concerned to use the parliamentary equilibrium, of which it held the balance, exclusively for Irish purposes, and it was also in a position effectually to resent any diversion of attention. The Labour party was devoted hardly less



THE HISTORIC "SCRAP OF PAPER"

The last folio of the Treaty of 1839, by which was guaranteed the independence and neutrality of Belgium. Lord Palmerston signed for Britain, and von Bülow for Prussia.

From the original document in the Record Office.



RT. HON. HERBERT H. ASQUITH

Prime Minister, July, 1914.

From a Photograph by Walton Adams, Reading.



RT. HON. D. LLOYD GEORGE
Chancellor of the Exchequer, July, 1914.

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

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exclusively to improving the economic condition of the manual workers: its supporters had no care for, and its leaders little knowledge of, foreign affairs: so far as it had any principles in that sphere they amounted to an inclination to regard with an almost implacable suspicion every British intervention in European politics and every

the equilibrium of the two great parties, because of its consciousness that the privileged position and growing power of the trade unions gave it a field of manoeuvre and choice of weapons denied to its rivals.

The government's auxiliaries, then, could not reasonably have been expected to support it in making, with a view to the possi-



IRELAND'S DANGER OF CIVIL WAR, JULY, 1914

National Volunteers cheering the first motor-car which left Howth Quay with arms and ammunition after the successful "gun-running" coup.

From a Photograph by Sport and General.

British expenditure on armaments. It had, besides, a tendency to regard the international solidarity of the working classes as a sentiment at once more elevated and more powerful than any devotion to a national, and especially to an imperial, entity; and among European states it naturally felt that tsarist Russia was the most remote from its own ideals and industrial Germany the nearest to them. To these characteristics the Labour party added more than all the irresponsibility natural to a small section inordinately strengthened by

bility of war, closer connexions with potential allies or heavier expenditure on military preparations: the less so because a large number of the government's regular forces shared, in this and in some other respects, the inclinations of the Labour party. It has been seen already that in 1909 Mr. McKenna needed all his courage and all the support of the prime minister and the foreign secretary to force his naval programme upon the party. This intractability of the left wing did not decrease with time, and indeed was stiffened by the

DIFFICULTIES OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

growth of confidence about Anglo-German relations, encouraged, for instance, by Sir Edward Grey's statement (November, 1911) that, if German policy was not aggressive, "in two or three years the talk about a great European war will have passed away and

even after that disillusion the two sections were not completely reunited nor were the "Liberal Imperialists" consistently in the ascendant. At the time of Agadir Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill had rallied to their support: Mr. Churchill remained



THE IRISH TROUBLES OF 1914

Sir Edward Carson in the Drumbeg procession passing the Town Hall, Belfast, to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne.

there will have been a growth of goodwill not only between England and Germany, but between those countries and the friends of both." ¹⁰ The foreign secretary's proviso might seem to have been destroyed by the new German Navy Law of 1912, and indeed Mr. Asquith believes that "thereafter even the most patiently optimistic of my colleagues began to feel a diminishing faith in limitation or reduction by agreement between Germany and ourselves." But

an enthusiastic and valuable recruit, but Mr. Lloyd George did not stay rallied, and perhaps the most effective and economical method of showing the government's difficulties on this head with its own supporters will be, rather than a general narrative or analysis, a short account of one episode in which he played a leading part.

This episode is characteristic, and all the more because of its date, the beginning of 1914. On New Year's Day the *Daily*

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Chronicle published an interview in which Mr. Lloyd George asserted that if armament expenditure had remained at the figure which Lord Randolph Churchill in 1887 regarded as bloated and extravagant, "the whole of the duties on tea, sugar, coffee, and cocoa would have been swept away,

I feel convinced that even if Germany ever had any idea of challenging our supremacy at sea, the exigencies of the military situation must necessarily put it completely out of her head. . . . The third reason is the most hopeful of all: it is the spread of the revolt against military oppression throughout



IRELAND'S DANGER OF CIVIL WAR, JULY, 1914

Ulster Volunteers marching through the streets of Belfast on a Sunday.

From a Photograph by Newspaper Illustrations.

and the income-tax reduced to 2d. in the pound." There were three reasons why this was the most favourable moment since twenty years for us to overhaul our expenditure on armaments: "the first is that our relations are infinitely more friendly now than they have been for years. . . . My second reason—and it is a very practical consideration—is that continental nations are directing their energies more and more to the strengthening of their land forces. . . .

the whole of Christendom, certainly throughout the whole of western Europe. Events in France and Germany have shown the same temper among the people of those lands as was manifested at the meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Leeds"—perhaps the most magnificent and the least deserved compliment ever received by foreigners from a British minister. This interview was not a bow drawn at a venture; it was, as the reference to the National



Inspecting one of the machine-guns secured by a "gun-running" exploit.



Presenting Colours to the Central Antrim Regiment of the Ulster Volunteer Force.
SIR EDWARD CARSON AND ULSTER'S MILITARISM, JULY, 1914

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Liberal Federation indicates, part of a campaign. It was followed up by Sir John Brunner, chairman of the federation, who declared that "neither in the reduction of our bloated military and naval expenditure nor in improvements of naval law—the abolition of prize money, exemption of peaceful private property at sea from capture, definition of contraband, and restriction of floating mines—can we expect progress unless a prompt declaration is made by Liberal associations throughout the country. . . ." And to the *Daily Chronicle* other newspapers joined their voices—the *Daily News*, which especially emphasized the unexampled cordiality of our foreign relations, and the increasing and irresistible claims of social necessities, and the *Manchester Guardian*, which was chiefly interested in the question of blockade. Moreover, a Reduction of Armaments Committee, which soon numbered over a hundred, was formed in the House of Commons.

Liberals and the Naval Estimates

In the face of these facts it becomes clear that the Liberal government did quite all that could be expected of it in successfully insisting upon its naval estimates, which were considerably heavier than any that had preceded them. To have explained to Mr. Lloyd George and his coadjutors that their arguments were ill-grounded in fact or inconsistent with each other, or offensive to our foreign friends, or of a morality whose self-consciousness did not save it from dubiety—to have attempted any such feat would have been vain beyond quixotry: Mr. Asquith cannot be confuted when he asserts that any further stiffening of policy or deepening of preparation "would have split the cabinet, would have split the party."

Nor is this argument for inaction altogether ignoble. Every party is more or less of a coalition; the Liberal party at this time was a good deal of a coalition, and was allied with other elements outside it. What other combination could have formed a government? It is true that many Unionists had shown themselves more watchful of national defence than most supporters of the

cabinet and than some at least of the cabinet itself; but even they had not as a party committed themselves to any alternative policy or principle—to conscription, for instance, or alliance with France, or large and immediate expenditure on aeroplanes and other military engines. Conceivably the Unionist leaders could have launched some such programme without splitting the party, but with what hope of adding to its numbers enough to surpass the "progressive" alliance against it?

The Preoccupations of Home Policy

The House of Commons of the years before the war had an unusually good right to think itself representative, having been elected almost unchanged in strength of parties twice in twelve months: it was not enough interested in foreign politics to do much more than squabble over the navy estimates, and in that matter it had just enough of the tradition of the indispensability to an island of sea power to bring it down on the right side. It may be (though it would be dangerous to assert), if ever since the turn of the century one of the parties had consistently preached the necessity of alliances or of a much more powerful army, that that party might have found itself in office and that its administration might have been of advantage to the country. If a majority of the population had, unbidden, wanted such a government, it would certainly have got it. In fact the country, politicians and public alike (or such portions of the public as had any care for politics at all), was excited about quite other matters—fiscal arrangements, wages, hours of labour, sectarian jealousies, unemployment insurance, the sale of alcohol, women's suffrage. Perhaps these preoccupations were inevitable; perhaps they were even salutary, if all considerations could be taken into account; but certainly there was nothing either inevitable or salutary about methods of controversy which tended to substitute hatred of other classes for love of the community, or about many of the arguments, often frivolous and sometimes dishonest, used against the "scaremongers," or about a love of mankind which began with a

CONTROVERSY ON DOMESTIC POLICY

dislike for England, or about the measures and counter measures which made civil war in Ireland almost certain and the obedience of the British army extremely doubtful. The nation was deeply and angrily divided about matters of domestic concern: it was not united, as to a much greater degree France was by her memories, and Germany part by force and part by ambition, on external questions: the blame for these

divisions no man can exactly distribute, but that does not mean that it was six of one and half a dozen of the other.

How the British people, so divided, reacted to the murder of the Austrian heir and the resultant diplomacy, hurrying with rapidly increasing pace towards a war that was to set in arms almost all of Europe and much of the rest of the world, that is the business of the next chapter.



SKETCH MAP OF THE NAVAL BASES OF THE NORTH SEA

By courtesy of the "Daily News."



THE INCIDENT THAT SET EUROPE ABLAZE

The Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife leaving the Town Hall, Sarajevo, a few minutes before their assassination.

From a Photograph by Walter Tanech.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

ON June 28th, 1914, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary, was murdered at Sarajevo by assassins of Serbian blood but Austrian citizenship: within six weeks the central empires were at war with Serbia, Russia, France, Belgium, and the British Empire, and it was already probable, and was soon to be certain, that other European and even non-European states would be involved in the conflict. Why among all the atrocities of history this one was so monstrously pregnant with effects still more atrocious cannot be fully apprehended without a complete knowledge of political and personal relations in Europe for generations before: some indication of the chief reasons, or at least of those with which the

British people has most concern, has been attempted in the preceding chapter. If, however, a thorough understanding of the ambitions and fears thrust into activity by the Sarajevo crime would require an amount and a variety of information not to be expected of humanity, on the other hand the process by which the governments turned those fears and ambitions into wars and alliances has now been ascertained almost beyond controversy and is explained in easily accessible books. Some account of that process is indispensable here, but it will be designed exclusively to throw light on British sentiment and action, and in particular will have as little as possible to say of the motives and merits of foreign governments.

AUSTRIA'S ULTIMATUM TO SERBIA

For Austria-Hungary, a congeries of states diverse in every respect except that from all, though by different titles, the same sovereign claimed allegiance, excluded by geography from the *Weltpolitik* of the twentieth century and by Prussia from her historic leadership of Germany, the sole field of ambition was in the lands to the south-east, the great mass of territory and complication of antagonisms loosely called the Balkans. In that field her especial concern was to dominate, if not to destroy, the Serbian kingdom, in which she saw not only an obstacle to her expansion but even a threat to her existence, since she had within her borders a large Slav population discontented with her rule and closely bound to the Serbs by kinship and sentiment. It was therefore determined, although the Sarajevo assassins were not Serbian subjects and there was no evidence to connect them with the Serbian government, to take against Serbia measures calculated at once to punish and to weaken

her. The price to be paid for this course of action was the risk of rousing the active antagonism of Serbia's patron Russia ; but this price seemed small when Austria received the Kaiser's assurance that she could count on German support. Accordingly, on July 23 the Austrian government, not unconscious of the likelihood that its action might result in the inception of a great war, presented to Serbia an ultimatum to expire in forty-eight hours.

The terms of the Austrian ultimatum reached the British government on the very day on which, by the breakdown of the Buckingham Palace conference, it was confronted with the more than ever urgent necessity of finding some device for avoiding the civil war which seemed almost inevitable in Ireland, and very likely to spread, in some form or other, to England. Nevertheless the reaction of the British government to the ultimatum was definite enough ; Sir Edward Grey told the Austrian ambassador that he



THE INCIDENT THAT SET EUROPE ABLAZE
Arrest of Prinzip, the assassin of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo.

From a Photograph by Franz Planer and Ruda Bruncer, Dvorak.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

had never known a document so formidable addressed to a sovereign state: this was no more than the truth, of a document which asked not only that the Serbian government should suppress Yugoslav societies and propaganda and dismiss all officials accused by the Austrian government of participation in such activities, but also that it should accept the collaboration of Austrian officials

contenting itself with an announcement of its interest in the Serbian situation and of its right to act as developments might dictate. Nevertheless, that day was marked by another step in the dreadful descent: the Austrian minister left Belgrade.

Already some months before the British admiralty had decided to substitute for the usual fleet manœuvres in the middle of



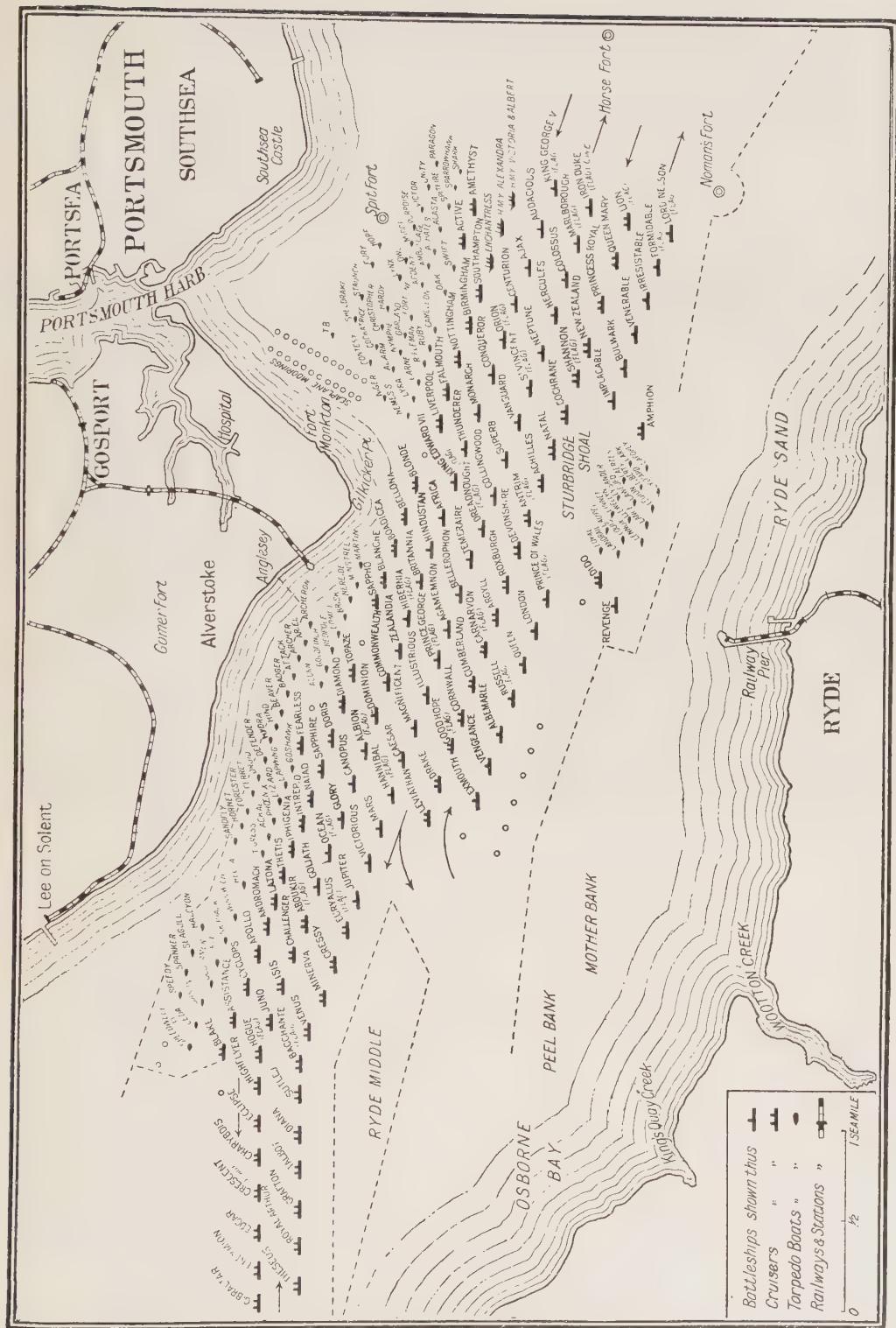
THE GREAT REVIEW AT SPITHEAD, 1914

From a Water-colour Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

in fulfilling these conditions. At the same time the foreign secretary proposed that the four great powers not directly interested in Serbia—Germany, France, Italy, and Great Britain—should collaborate for the maintenance of peace.¹ The next day (July 25) there seemed some hope that Germany might fall in with this suggestion, and that was the date also of the Serbian reply, which may fairly be said to have accepted substantially Austria's demands and to have gone as far in concession as was possible for an independent government. The Russian government received French and English warnings that the mobilization of its army would further endanger the maintenance of peace, and (for the time) heeded them,

1914 a test mobilization. The naval forces assembled in pursuance of this decision were on the point of dispersal: they were kept together by an order issued on July 26 by Prince Louis of Battenberg, first sea lord, on his own responsibility, and confirmed at the first opportunity by the first lord of the admiralty and the prime minister. On the same day Sir Edward Grey, in continuance of his mediatorial policy, suggested a meeting in London of the four "disinterested" powers, with a view to arranging the difficulties: this suggestion was wrecked by Germany's insistence that she could take part in mediation only at Austria's request.

The 27th marked the first possibility of the participation of the British government



THE GREAT NAVAL REVIEW AT SPITHEAD, 1914

Chart showing the position of the vessels.

By courtesy of the "Daily Telegraph."

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

as something more than a benevolent intermediary and also the beginning of the transference of public interest from hunger-striking suffragists and gun-running Irishmen to the European crisis. Sir Edward Grey approved of a public announcement that the dispersal of the fleet had been postponed, and told the German ambassador that if his country helped Austria in a war against



SIR EDWARD GREY (AFTERWARDS VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON)

Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1914.

From a Photograph by H. Walter Barnett.

Russia, then "other issues might be raised which would supersede the local dispute between Austria and Serbia." This was a good deal less than that declaration of integral solidarity with France and Russia for which the latter power had asked a few days before and the former was to ask three days later; but at least it was an intimation that if the British government could not keep the peace it might enter the war, and that it was preparing for that contingency.

Nor was it only in eastern Europe but nearer home as well that local disputes were being superseded. The approaching appeasement of controversy and shifting of

interest were signalized by the proceedings in the House of Commons, where the foreign secretary narrated events down to that time and expressed the hope that the Serbian reply might form the basis of some such conference as he had suggested, and where it was agreed that, in the circumstances, criticism of admiralty policy on the navy estimates was impossible, though the Irish question was productive of not less heat than usual.

If the public events of this day marked a significant development of general opinion, the secret discussions of the cabinet are no less significant of the slowness and hesitancy with which policy was following events: an overwhelming majority of ministers was pacific, some absolutely, others almost absolutely.² The foreign secretary stuck to two cardinal points—that his plan of a conference should be given every possible chance and that hostile warships should be kept out of the Channel. Of these the first was already almost out of the range of practicability, the second was to expand to cover the use of every sort of force.

To recount all the diplomatic details of the next week would be tedious and not very illuminative: after the beginning of Austro-Serbian hostilities, on July 28th, they had little reality. Germany began, much too late, efforts to moderate the violence of her ally and to use the personal relations between Kaiser and Tsar to localize the conflict: the Austrian government rejected Russia's proposal of conversations between its Petersburg ambassador and Sazonoff, the Russian foreign secretary. Grey begged Germany to suggest any method of preventing the spread of war, promising Russia's concurrence if only Germany could obtain that of Austria. On the 29th, although, as he explained to M. Paul Cambon, the government had not decided what to do in a contingency which he still hoped might not arise, he told Lichnowsky in a quite private and friendly way what was in his mind. This is the gist of what he said: "There would be no question of our intervening if Germany was not involved, or even if France was not involved. But we knew very well that if the issue did become

BRITAIN AND NEUTRALITY OF BELGIUM

such that we thought British interests required us to intervene, we must intervene at once, and the decision would have to be very rapid, just as the decisions of other powers had to be." Grey went on to say, "I hoped that the friendly tone of our conversations would continue as at present, and that I should be able to keep as closely in touch with the German government in working for peace. But if we failed in our efforts to keep the peace, and if the issue spread so that it involved practically every European interest, I did not wish to be open to any reproach from him that the friendly tone of all our conversations had misled him or his government into supposing that we should not take action, and that, if they had not been so misled, the course of things might have been different."³ The form of words has something of the turgidity common in official language, but it unmistakably meant not less than a definite warning that in the last resort the British government might be capable of making war in defence of what it conceived to be its interests.

Germany's Last Hour Proposals

On the same day the German chancellor was endeavouring to remove this possibility: Britain was offered, in return for a guarantee of neutrality, a promise that Germany would make no territorial acquisitions in Europe at the expense of France, and that the integrity of Belgium should be preserved after the war was over on condition that she had not sided against Germany. This offer was not considered; but its refusal so little committed Sir Edward Grey to definite alliance with France or certain hostility to Germany that on the 31st he told Lichnowsky that "if Germany could get any reasonable proposal put forward which made it clear that Germany and Austria were striving to preserve European peace, and that Russia and France would be unreasonable if they rejected it, I would support it at Petrograd and Paris, and would go the length of saying that, if Russia and France would not accept it, the government would have nothing more to do with the consequences; but otherwise I told the

ambassador that if France became involved we should be drawn in."⁴

Clearly the government, or at least the foreign secretary, was a little more fixed as to what should be done in the event of France being involved in a war not of her own making: but it was only a little more. On the same day as this warning to the German ambassador Sir Edward was telling the French ambassador (in reply to a reminder of the letters exchanged in 1912 and a request "to say what we should do if certain circumstances arose, for instance if Germany demanded that France should cease her preparations or demand her neutrality") that "we had come to the conclusion in the cabinet to-day that we could not give any pledge at the present time. Up to the present we did not feel that any treaties or obligations were involved."⁵

Protection of Belgium's Neutrality

It was on this same day, however, that the issue was raised which was to settle the hesitations (though it was still to take half a week to do it) of the cabinet: in reply to Sir Edward's solicitude for the neutrality of Belgium, France at once gave the fullest assurance, while Germany objected that an answer would betray her strategic intentions. On the next day Sir Edward refused to promise neutrality even in return for a guarantee of Belgium and of the territorial integrity of France, conditions suggested (with how little chance of fulfilling them) by Lichnowsky: he added that "our attitude will be determined largely—I will not say entirely—by the question of Belgium, which appeals very strongly to public opinion here": and on August 2nd the French ambassador felt safe in reporting to his government that "the protection of Belgian neutrality is here considered so important that Great Britain will regard its violation by Germany as a *casus belli*. It is a specially British interest, and there is no doubt that the British government, faithful to the traditions of its policy, will insist upon it, even if the business world—in which German influence is making tenacious efforts—exercises pressure to prevent the government committing itself against Germany."

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Since the launching of Austria's attack on Serbia, on July 28th, not only the words of ministers but the executive acts of governments had been increasingly dictated by the prospect of an extension of armed conflict. On that very day the British fleet had been ordered to its war stations: on the next the Tsar signed the order for general

Government of Ireland (Amendment) Bill, assisted by an assurance from the leader of the opposition that "whatever our domestic differences may be, they do not prevent us presenting a united front in the counsels of the world."

On the 31st Russia and Austria both started general mobilization: Germany de-



THE FIRST NOTES OF THE WAR IN LONDON
Reading Royal Proclamations on the steps of the Royal Exchange.

mobilization, Austria ordered general mobilization, and Germany proclaimed a state of *drohende Kriegsgefahr* (imminent danger of war), equivalent to the first stages of mobilization: on July 30th the British prime minister was so much impressed by the conviction that "the issues of peace and war are hanging in the balance," and that "in these circumstances it is of vital importance in the interests of the whole world that this country, which has no interests of its own directly at stake, should present a united front, and be able to speak and act with the authority of an undivided nation," as to carry the indefinite postponement of the

clared martial law, presented to Russia an ultimatum requiring the countermanding of mobilization within twelve hours, and inquired of the French government what would be its attitude in the event of a Russo-German war, to which Monsieur Viviani replied that France would consider her own interests. It became known later that if the German ambassador had received a promise of neutrality he was then to demand the custody of Toul and Verdun until the end of the Russian war. On the first day of August, therefore, Germany and Russia had joined the combatants, and France began to mobilize. At the same time



Naval Reserve men of the Royal Yacht Squadron answering the call.



Scottish fishermen, Naval Reservists, entering barracks at Portsmouth
MOBILIZATION OF THE NAVY, AUGUST, 1914

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Mr. Churchill, having failed to obtain the cabinet's consent to the mobilization of the navy, told the prime minister that he should give the orders all the same and, not being forbidden, did so, and the foreign secretary

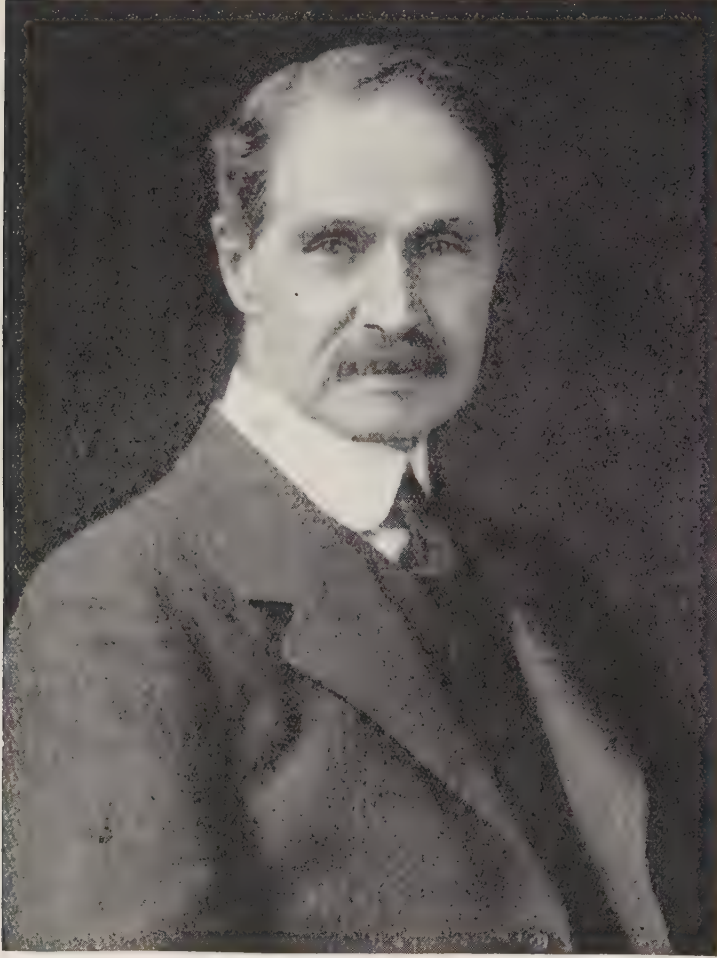
all the protection in its power. This assurance is, of course, subject to the policy of the government receiving the support of parliament, and must not be taken as binding the government to take any action

until the above contingency of action by the German fleet takes place."

This was the day, too, of the German ultimatum to Belgium, and of an incident which must have gone some way to re-assure the cabinet on the subject of parliamentary support, when the leaders of the opposition addressed to the prime minister a letter stating their conviction that it would be "fatal to the honour or security of the United Kingdom to hesitate in supporting France and Russia," and promising their assistance in any steps which the government might find it necessary to take. On the 3rd the mobilization of the British army and navy was sanctioned, Belgium rejected the German ultimatum, and Germany declared war on France; most important of all was Sir Edward Grey's statement in the House of Commons, which made British intervention a certainty.

The foreign secretary's statement and the other speeches made in conse-

quence of it are of such significance that in any consideration of the relation of the British people to the war they demand more than a cursory analysis. Of the first, the justice of this demand needs no demonstration: it was the official declaration of the government's policy on the very eve of hostilities. For the rest, the devotion of



THE RT. HON. A. BONAR LAW

Leader of the Opposition, who assured the Government of "unhesitating support" on its war policy.

From a Photograph by Elliott & Fry.

assured M. Cambon that we would keep German warships out of the Channel. This assurance, in the form which the cabinet authorized on August 2nd, was highly conditional: "If the German fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against French coasts or shipping, the British fleet will give



ONE OF THE MOST MOMENTOUS INCIDENTS IN THE HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT

Sir Edward Grey making his speech on Belgian Neutrality, and the support of France by the British Fleet, August 3rd, 1914.

from a Drawing by S. Begg.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

much space to them requires some explanation: how unrepresentative they were, the near future was to show and later pages of this work will have to discuss: at least they represented the views of a considerable section of the greatest organ of the State. The temporary impotence of that section was soon demonstrated, but without some knowledge of its existence and nature it is impossible to understand either the conduct of the government in days of peace or the character of the disunion and discouragement which were the natural effects of the strain of war indefinitely prolonged and progressively heightened.

Sir E. Grey on Naval Dispositions

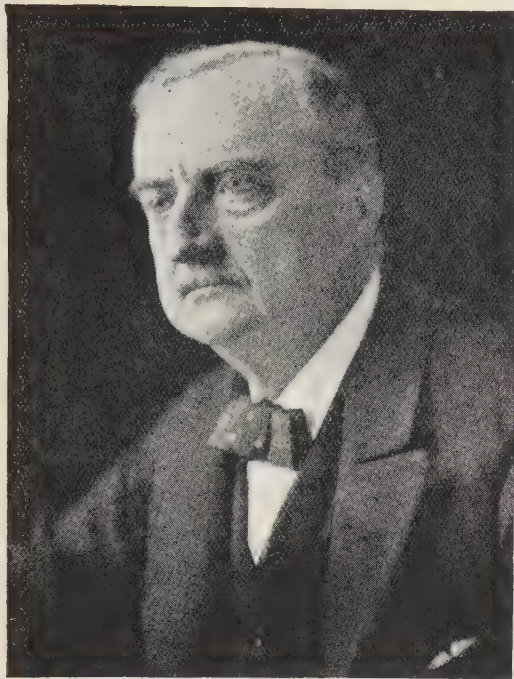
Sir Edward Grey reminded the house of the government's pledge that in any such crisis it should be free to decide the British attitude unrestricted by any secret engagement: he then justified this pledge by a brief recital of diplomatic history for the previous six years, including the letters exchanged by himself and M. Cambon in November, 1912: he went on to refer to the alterations in fleet dispositions: "The French fleet being concentrated in the Mediterranean, the situation is very different from what it used to be, because the friendship which has grown up between the two countries has given them a sense of security that there was nothing to be feared from us. The French coasts are absolutely undefended. The French fleet is in the Mediterranean, and has for some years been concentrated there because of the feeling of confidence and friendship which has existed between the two countries. My own feeling is that if a foreign fleet, engaged in a war which France had not sought and in which she had not been the aggressor, came down the English Channel and bombarded and battered the undefended coasts of France, we could not stand aside and see this going on practically within sight of our eyes, with our arms folded, looking on dispassionately, doing nothing! I believe that would be the feeling of this country." Nor was our interest involved in the disposition of naval forces only thus sentimentally and indirectly: suppose that for the present

we stood neutral and later were involved in war: "we have not kept a fleet in the Mediterranean which is equal to dealing alone with a combination of other fleets in the Mediterranean. It would be the very moment when we could not detach more ships to the Mediterranean, and we might have exposed this country from our negative attitude at the present moment to the most appalling risk." In these circumstances he had given the French ambassador the conditional assurance of naval support of which mention has been made: he read that assurance "not as entailing immediate aggressive action on our part, but as binding us to take aggressive action should that contingency (of action by the German fleet) arise. . . . I understand that the German government would be prepared, if we would pledge ourselves to neutrality, to agree that its fleet would not attack the northern coast of France . . . but it is far too narrow an engagement for us. And there is the far more serious consideration—becoming more serious every hour—there is the question of the neutrality of Belgium."

Intervention on Behalf of Belgium

After giving a short history of this question, and quoting the "supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty's government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium," just received by King George from King Albert, the foreign secretary continued: "Diplomatic intervention took place last week on our part. What can diplomatic intervention do now? We have great and vital interests in the independence—and integrity is the least part—of Belgium. . . . If in this war which is before Europe the neutrality of one of those countries (Belgium and Holland) is violated, if the troops of one of the countries violate its neutrality and no action be taken to resent it, at the end of the war, whatever the integrity may be, the independence will be gone." He did not believe it possible, as might be suggested, for us to stand aside from the war and at the end to "intervene with effect to put things right and to adjust them to our own point of view": in any case, "for us, with a powerful fleet, which

PARTY VIEWS ON INTERVENTION



JOHN REDMOND

Leader of the Irish Party, who assured the Government that they might "to-morrow withdraw every one of their troops from Ireland."

From a Photograph by Ernest H. Mills.

we believe able to protect our commerce, to protect our shores, and to protect our interests, if we are engaged in war, we shall suffer but little more than we shall suffer even if we stand aside."

After a reference to Ireland as "the one bright spot in the whole of this terrible situation," and an assertion that the only way to be certain of keeping out of the war would be an immediate proclamation of unconditional neutrality, which he regarded as impossible, Sir Edward closed with an expression of his belief that the government would "have the support of the house at large in proceeding to whatever the consequences may be and whatever measures may be forced upon us by the development of facts or action taken by others."

He was followed by Mr. Bonar Law, who publicly reiterated the assurance that "in whatever steps they think it necessary to take for the honour and security of the country, they can rely on the unhesitating support of the opposition"; and by Mr.

Redmond, who said "to the government that they may to-morrow withdraw every one of their troops from Ireland . . . and that if it is allowed to us, in comradeship with our brethren in the north, we will ourselves defend the coasts of our country."

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the Labour party, was not convinced: he thought that the foreign secretary was wrong: "if the right honourable gentleman had come here to-day and told us that our country is in danger . . . we would be with him and behind him. If this is so, we will vote him what money he wants. Yes, and we will go further. We will offer him ourselves if the country is in danger. But he has not persuaded me that it is . . . and I am perfectly certain . . . he will not persuade a large section of the country. If the nation's honour were in danger we would be with him," but the Crimea and South Africa sufficiently showed how that plea might be abused: "if the right honourable gentleman could come to us and tell



RAMSAY MACDONALD

Leader of the Labour Party, who was not persuaded that "the country was in danger."

From a Photograph by Elliott & Fry.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

us that a small European nationality like Belgium is in danger, and could assure us he is going to confine the conflict to that question, then we would support him. . . . The right honourable gentleman said nothing about Russia. We want to know

to have the power, civilization, and genius of France removed from European history, then let him say so. But it is an absolutely impossible conception which we are talking about to endeavour to justify that which the right honourable gentleman has fore-



SERVICE EQUIPMENT OF BRITISH TROOPS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

about that. We want to try to find out what is going to happen, when it is all over, to the power of Russia in Europe, and we are not going to go blindly into this conflict without having some sort of a rough idea as to what is going to happen." As to France, "no such friendship as the right honourable gentleman describes between one nation and another could ever justify one of those nations entering into war on behalf of the other. If France is really in danger, if, as the result of this, we are going

shadowed." Mr. MacDonald was conscious that the house was against him and his friends, but he had "been through this before, and 1906 came as part recompense. It will come again."

When the house reassembled at seven the same evening it heard from the foreign secretary the news that Belgium had received a twelve-hours' ultimatum from Germany, and that she had replied that she would repel aggression by all means. There can be no doubt that it was this, and the



DEPARTURE OF THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

The 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards marching to their unknown destination.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

invasion which followed next morning, which convinced almost all the ministers who still needed conviction of the rightfulness and probable necessity of war. Meanwhile the Belgian news did not silence the House of Commons champions of non-intervention, and their arguments will now be indicated as shortly as possible.

"Not a People's War"

The first speaker was Mr. Morrell (Liberal): he believed that Sir Edward Grey had done his best to prevent war, but since war had become inevitable, had he made every effort to secure fair terms from Germany for British neutrality? Germany had offered to respect the French coast: and as to Belgium, if it were a question of annexation we might be bound to go to war, but it would be absurd to do so "because, forsooth, Germany is going to insist on her right to march some troops . . . because there may be a few German regiments in a corner of Belgium." Besides, Belgium had not asked for more than diplomatic support. He believed that the real reason was the fear and jealousy of German ambition, and "in going to war in this way we are going to war just as much to preserve the despotism of Russia as to interfere with German ambition."

These arguments may be taken as typical of those employed throughout the criticisms of the foreign secretary's statement, and in the later speeches only those arguments will be noticed which differ from Mr. Morrell's. Mr. Wedgwood (Liberal) expressed concern for the feeding of his 70,000 constituents in the potteries and for the "civilization built up on a vast organization and on a pin-point of credit." Mr. Edmund Harvey (Liberal) thought that the utmost efforts should be made to save the terrible sacrifice of life, and that the war was neither in England nor elsewhere a people's war, but was made (though not in England) "by men in high places, by diplomats working in secret, by bureaucrats." Mr. Keir Hardie (Labour) wanted to know what was being done to meet the inevitable destitution among the poor, a matter which interested him more than the relief of the Stock

Exchange (a reference to the Act for suspending bills of exchange); he belonged to a party which was international and which in Germany, in France, in Belgium, and in Austria was taking all manner of risks to preserve peace: he was for neutrality on the terms outlined by previous speakers, and he and some of his friends would do all they could to rouse the working classes in opposition to the proposal of the government. Mr. Ponsonby (Liberal) had the night before seen half-drunken youths waving flags in St. James's Street: the foreign secretary's speech showed that what had been ranking all these years was a deep animosity against German ambitions; it was in keeping with the half-drunken scenes he reported; it was all the fault of the balance of power, and for that reason he had every year protested against armament expenditure: one result of war would be the looting of food by men without money to buy it.

Pleas for Further Negotiations

Sir A. Markham (Liberal) regretted the tone of the last speech and had always opposed the policy of the *entente*, but thought that it was our duty to our country and to liberty to stand by Belgium. Sir Albert Spicer (Liberal) pressed for further negotiations with a view to neutrality. Mr. Rowntree (Liberal) was of opinion that no power had done everything that was right, and could not believe that it was impossible yet to obtain from Germany the two assurances which the foreign secretary specially desired: we were going to fight for Russia, and any strengthening of Russia would endanger our position in Asia: besides, in going to war with Germany we should be going to war with a country whose ideals and whose civilization were very near our own. Mr. Molteno (Liberal) held that no vital British interest had been attacked, nor did the Belgian neutrality treaty bind us to fight, but a hope and an expectation had been held out to France, which in the foreign secretary's judgment constituted an obligation: as to the horrid balance of power, which might have been thought to have been disposed of by the eloquence of Cobden and Bright, it would be absurd for him to

LIBERALS AND NEUTRALITY

say anything more where their voices had not succeeded. Mr. France (Liberal) assured the house of the good intentions of dealers in foodstuffs, and Mr. Lloyd George of those of the government with regard to the security of the food supply. Mr. Llewellyn Williams (Liberal) pointed out that no trade route or oversea possession had been threatened, and believed that an honourable neutrality might yet be secured: the country did not yet want war, but the war, like every other war, would become popular: it might mean bankruptcy to the Insurance Act and danger to old-age pensions.

Complaints of Anti-German Policy

Mr. Outhwaite (Liberal) dwelt on the difference between industrial constituencies, like his own, where factories were being closed, and agricultural constituencies, where the prices of their produce were going up: there was no justification for war, which originated as much with France as with Germany, and might end in the inevitable aggrandizement of Russia: he could see only a technical violation of the neutrality of Belgium: in spite of cries of "Divide" he would go on with what he had to say, since he might not have the opportunity of speaking again, as his duty lay among his starving constituents. Mr. King (Liberal) commented on the unanimous support of the official opposition and their almost unbroken silence: he inquired whether the cabinet was united and whether the Ulster Tories were going to fight against the most Protestant power in Europe: this war would be one against German civilization and the German people who were our friends, not against the bureaucracy and the military caste which had mismanaged their affairs, and in favour of Russia's atrocious tyrannical government: the question went much farther than Belgium and the Channel, and the government had been too precipitate. Sir J. Jardine (Liberal) believed that there was still some way of settling the crisis: war would bring ruin to commercial centres; the working class in Germany was dead against the war, and it would be the same in the manufacturing towns of the north. When he left Scotland, a few days before,

people were much more interested in Ireland than in Europe. Mr. Aneurin Williams (Liberal) complained of the anti-German policy pursued for many years and of the anti-German tone of the foreign secretary's statement; there should be a definite and unmistakable offer to Germany in exchange for neutrality; we had not sufficiently restrained Russia while the Kaiser was doing his utmost for peace. Sir William Byles (Liberal) thought that the war would far too soon become popular: this thing had been brought about by not more than a dozen men, and now we were to hire men to blow out the brains of other men: it was all very well to talk of defending Belgium, but could we restrict our action to that? Mr. Annan Bryce (Liberal) believed that the great body of opinion was still in favour of neutrality, and asserted (though it was at once denied) that all the cheering for Sir Edward Grey's statement had come from the Unionist side of the house. If the Italians could keep out of the war, why not the French? The real French interest was not her engagement to Russia but her hope for Alsace-Lorraine. The war would endanger trade routes; that was why he had always opposed naval increases, because the stronger your navy grows the more you wish to use it.

Inevitability of War

Mr. Denman (Liberal) distinguished three possible ways of attempting to enforce Belgian neutrality: we might try naval warfare, which would fail; we might try land warfare, but surely the Belgians would prefer that their country should not be made the cockpit of this Armageddon; or we might use the power which our neutrality gave. Mr. Ellis Davies (Liberal) was grateful for the efforts of the foreign secretary and of the opposition, and reported the wish of the vast majority of the people with whom he came in contact for one more effort, since Belgian territory had not yet been violated; and Mr. Pringle (Liberal) believed that the government's policy was defending international morality against blood and iron, and that Russia had always been on the side of liberty in south-eastern

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ONE OF THE FIRST SIGNS OF WAR IN LONDON

Ammunition wagons from the powder magazine in Hyde Park arriving at London Bridge Station.

Europe. After some argument between Mr. Balfour (Unionist) and Colonel Seely (Liberal) as to whether "the very dregs and lees of debate" had yet been reached, the house was adjourned.

Before this debate the foreign secretary's speech, or the main lines of it, had received cabinet authorization, and a majority of the cabinet had come to the conviction that war was inevitable. It is remarkable that although up to this point such pains had been taken to carry the cabinet along with the development of policy, yet now, after the debate (whether cabinet solidarity was taken for granted, or whether it was calculated that other necessities were even more urgent or wider solidarities more certain), the ultimatum which resulted in war with Germany at eleven the next evening was drawn up without the co-operation of the cabinet and rested on the authority of the prime minister.⁷

Of all the speeches made in criticism or support of Sir Edward Grey's statement on August 3rd, only one had come from the Unionists, one from the Irish, and two from the Labour party: the rest came from the Liberals and were almost all critical, as were both the Labour utterances. More surprising than the distribution of the speeches was the uniformity of the arguments used. Mr. Bonar Law was absolutely alone in accepting any guidance from his judgment of British interests: all the other speakers, on either side, were concerned with international morality or free government or ideals of civilization. Very few of them showed any care for the lives which war would cost, and the foreign secretary himself evidently envisaged risks rather to ships and commerce than to lives and limbs. The most absolute opposition to war came from the two Labour speakers: Mr. MacDonald did, indeed, avow that not merely

SOCIALIST PROTESTS AGAINST THE WAR

his voice but his person would be at his country's disposal if once he were convinced of its danger; but in the event he never did reach that conviction.

This Labour opposition to the policy of the government was no surprise sprung in the excitement of debate, but already had a considerable history. As long ago as 1907 the Socialists of Europe, assembled in international conference at Stuttgart, had formulated the principles on which their national sections were to act "if war threatens to break out": they were "to use every effort to prevent the war by every means which seem to them the most appropriate, having regard to the sharpness of the class war and to the general political situation. Should war none the less break out, their duty is to intervene to bring it promptly to an end, and with all their energies to use the economic and political crisis created by the war to rouse the populace

from its slumbers, and to hasten the fall of capitalist domination." This formula had been accepted by the British Socialists, and some, at least, of them hoped that the agreement on it meant that "the spirit which marched through Sedan to Paris could not be revived in our generation," and that in France and Germany at least no government would "dare to-day to make an unnecessary war."⁸

When war did in fact threaten to break out, the first representative of Socialism in England to take action was the British Socialist Party, which on July 28th protested against Austria's note and declaration of war and congratulated foreign Socialists on their efforts to preserve peace.⁹ The International Socialist Bureau at Brussels unanimously considered it "an obligation for the workers of all concerned nations not only to continue but even strengthen their demonstrations against war in favour of peace



EARLY WAR DAYS IN LONDON
Territorials signing forms of service in Dean's Yard, Westminster.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



RECRUITS FOR THE ARMY
Lining up at the Central Recruiting Office.

and of a settlement of the Austro-Serbian conflict by arbitration." On July 30th the Labour members of parliament expressed gratification at Sir Edward Grey's endeavours to secure mediation, hoped "that on no account will this country be dragged into the European conflict in which, as the prime minister had stated, we have no direct or indirect interest," and issued a summons to "all Labour organizations in the country to watch events vigilantly so as to oppose, if need be, in the most effective way any action which may involve us in war." This was unequivocal and unqualified. It

was reinforced two days later by the manifesto issued by Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. Arthur Henderson on behalf of the British section of the International Socialist Bureau: this document left on one side "the rights and wrongs of the sudden, crushing attack made by the militarist empire of Austria upon Serbia," in the assurance "that the workers of all countries likely to be drawn into the conflict must strain every nerve to prevent their governments from committing them to war," and that "everywhere Socialists and the organized forces of Labour were taking this course"; it went on to summon those of Great Britain to "compel those of the governing class and their press who are eager to commit you to co-operate with Russian despotism to keep silence and respect the decision of the overwhelming majority of the people, who will have neither part nor lot in such infamy. The success of Russia at the present day would be a curse to the world."

It is noteworthy that the Labour protestants against war in any circumstances, like some of the Liberal speakers of whom mention has been made, were quite certain



RECRUITS FOR THE ARMY
Taking the oath.

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ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATION



RECRUITS FOR THE ARMY
Off to the depôt.

of the agreement of a great majority of their fellow-citizens: it is difficult to believe that in this matter their judgment was altogether correct, though how far it was wrong no man can exactly estimate nor conclusively prove. They did something to put it to the touch on August 2nd, when they held in Trafalgar Square an anti-war meeting which protested "against any step being taken by the government of this country to support Russia, either directly or in consequence of any understanding with France, as being not only offensive to the political traditions of the country but disastrous to Europe; and declared that as we have no interest, direct or indirect, in the threatened quarrels which may result from the action of Austria in Serbia, the government of Great Britain should rigidly decline to engage in war, but should confine itself to efforts to bring about peace as speedily as possible." Accounts differ as to the character of the meeting which carried this resolution and as to the extent of its unanimity: it is certain that a considerable section seceded and held a "patriotic" meeting under the Admiralty arch, and that this was the last corporate and un-

qualified protest of Socialism against war. Its corporate activity was very soon diverted from the ensuring of peace at any price to the interests of manual workers in a country at war. On August 3rd Mr. Will Crooks, in the words of one of the most eminent of Labour publicists, "gained the distinction of being the first member of the Labour party to declare for war."

Another indication of the way in which the prospect of war was faced, and one probably not less re-

presentative of general feeling than the



RECRUITS FOR THE ARMY
Taking particulars at the depôt.

*From Photographs in the Imperial War Museum.
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HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

utterances of Labour spokesmen, is to be found in the foreign news, in the leading articles, and in the letters printed by the newspapers. But this kind of evidence is treacherous, and there is not room here for very much of it: what is printed has been chosen with a desire for honesty. If for no other reason than for this, that they show the extreme slowness with which the British people was interested in the continental crisis, the newspapers repay some attention. It has been seen that the government itself was very slow to transfer its attention from these islands to Europe, and that it was not till August 2nd that the cabinet as a whole came to regard war as a conceivable instrument of policy, the violation of Belgium providing the clenching argument for many ministers—notably for Mr. Lloyd George, chancellor of the exchequer, and quite the most popular and energetic politician of the time. The public is not normally a unified entity even as much as the cabinet was, and it may be argued whether the evolution of its opinion was a little slower or a little faster than was the case with its governors: certainly it followed much the same lines.

The Press and the Crisis

As a rule it was not till towards the end of July that the papers devoted any considerable amount of space to the Austro-Serbian conflict, and not till the very end that it occupied as much as the Irish dispute. The *Times* did indeed from the 10th onwards every day print some account from its foreign correspondents of the hopes and fears current in Vienna and Belgrade, but it was as late as the 16th that, in its first leading article devoted to the subject, it advised Serbia to open an inquiry before she was bidden, and Austria to remember that force would not solve the south Slav problem. A week later the *Manchester Guardian*, in its first editorial reference to the subject, thought that the whole question turned on the validity of Austria's evidence against Serbia, and that until it was presented no Serbian action could give any excuse for a diplomatic rupture. On July 25th the *Morning Post*, which had hitherto abstained from editorial

comment, pleaded that if the powers did not induce Austria to modify her ultimatum, then force was enthroned over Europe. On the same day the *Times* opined that if Austria had spoken her last word the verge of war had been reached, a war in which Russia would help Serbia, Austria could count upon Germany, and the calculations made in certain quarters on the domestic difficulties of Russia, France, and England would run great risk of disappointment. The *Manchester Guardian* found the Austrian note very stiff but natural, and deeply regretted that Russia had decided to encourage Serbia in resistance, in spite of the importance which it had previously attached to the question of evidence; it was nearly another week before its London correspondent met a friend who was surprised that Francis Joseph had been persuaded into war, and believed that it could be only because the proof of Serbian guilt must have been something quite exceptional.

The Press on the Possibilities of War

By the 27th the *Times* was giving more space to Europe than to Ireland, and was persuaded that war was more likely than not, in which case localization would be quite impossible (the *Daily Mail* had already announced that if the conflict were not localized the Triple Alliance would be confronted by the Triple Entente). Two days later the *Morning Post* had come to the conclusion that a day or two would decide whether there was to be a European war in which all the great powers, including England, would be involved: but the *Manchester Guardian* thought that while the Serbian reply conceded the substance it did so with such ungraciousness as to deprive it of all power to satisfy; that Englishmen were not the guardians of Serbia or even of European peace, and that, rather than be guilty of such madness as dropping party strife to form a national front (as the *Times* suggested), there was no constitutional means of revolt which Englishmen ought not to use who thought more of their duty to their own country than of the real or imaginary interests of the Russian autocracy.

Space fails to indicate the lines taken by

PRESS ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST WAR

many other newspapers or to follow much further those of the journals already mentioned. In general, the *Manchester Guardian* may be taken as typical of the "progressive" organs, except that the *Westminster Gazette* throughout held that war, however hateful, might be an ultimate necessity, in much the sense of the foreign secretary himself: the *Times* and *Morning Post* are equally typical of the Conservative press, in which the *Standard* and *Daily Graphic* alone (with one or two provincial papers) were something like absolutely non-interventionist, while the *Daily Telegraph* clung to the possibility of neutrality for rather longer than the *Times* and *Morning Post*.¹⁰

The weekly papers were divided in much the same way, the most violently opposed to war being the *Labour Leader*, which on July 30th announced that the war must be stopped and organized Labour must stop it; on August 6th, that the quarrel was between the ruling classes, who would leave the workers to do all the fighting and their wives and children to hunger and starvation; and on August 20th, that opposition must go on and was quite likely to be reinforced by a Socialist revolution in Germany.

Something must be said, if the atmosphere of the time is to be recaptured, not only of the advice given but of the arguments with which it was backed. On the side of a contingent intervention they were that Austria's success meant an abdication of the European concert in favour of brute bullying, that France was being blamelessly involved and in that event had a right to expect British assistance, that anyway a German defeat of France would destroy our security, and that all this was still truer of Belgium.

On the other side it was said that we had no interest in Serbia, a disreputable power whose present case was supremely disreputable; that business would be ruined, that many wage-earners (the estimates went as high as 90 per cent.) would lose their employment, and that starving men would take food by force; that the balance of power had been damned for ever by Bright, and that in any case our true interest was to lend our weight



RECRUITS FOR THE ARMY

Serving out kit.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

to Germany against Russia; that Russia was an atrocious autocracy; that Germany's violation of Belgium was a necessity not to be harshly judged, merely technical in its nature, and that we should not repair the violation of Belgian neutrality by violating the neutrality of England. Another argument, which attained some notoriety from its use by a number of professors, was that Germany led the world in the arts and sciences, in consequence of which war upon her in the interests of Russia and Serbia would be a sin against civilization. One curious thing noted is that the avoidance of bloodshed was hardly mentioned: when Sir Edward Grey was rebuked for contending that we should suffer very little more from belligerence than from neutrality, it was on the ground that in the second case we

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

could have traded with both sides : and the *Jewish Chronicle* was, if not singular, at least exceptional in protesting with all its might against the mere thought of spilling British blood.

Popular Reasons for Non-intervention

How far the arguments on either side represented feeling in the country, or influenced it, everyone who can remember that time will judge for himself, and others can best estimate from subsequent history. Some help might have been hoped from the correspondence columns of the newspapers, but the letters printed came chiefly from persons whose views could easily have been predicted and almost without exception supported the cases of the papers to which they were sent. One or two things, however, are clear.

It is most clear of all that the main reason for opposing intervention was a general dislike of inconvenience : this does not imply a moral condemnation. It was natural that business men should think commerce humanity's main consideration, Labour leaders the propagating of Socialism, scholars the advancement of learning, men with a gospel the spreading of the faith, Free Church ministers prayer and morality, politicians the triumph of party : perhaps one or more or all of them were right. Certainly each of them might reasonably fear that his objects and efforts would be compromised by war, and few went farther to search for arguments against it. The argument that killing and maiming are evils was, as has already been seen, but little used ; stranger still, the argument that all war is forbidden by religion or morality appeared hardly at all at this time, although it was perfectly familiar ; and even the one that had been rapidly superseding it, the contention that there can be no economic profit from war but only loss, did not often occur in that philosophic form, though much more often as applied to specific economic factors—wage-earning or the cotton trade or old-age pensions.

This resentment of war as an interruption was in its nature characteristic of governing persons, persons with ideas or phrases or

capital or administrative positions, rather than of ordinary people, who for the most part had no activities to whose continuance their conceptions of themselves were bound, and who very early found that the prophecies of unemployment and starvation were unjustified. For this reason the opposition to war had no very deep roots : the proportion of the population which really believed that Britain's case was bad or all war wicked was never large, and both of these theses were in the nature of after-thoughts on the part of the non-interventionists. Perhaps second thoughts were best, but they were never very successful, and pacifism became troublesome again only when it was reinforced by defeatism, and when bitter experience had shown many writers and orators and traders and proprietors that their fears of interruption were well-grounded.

Effect of German Violation of Belgium

Another noteworthy characteristic of the discussion which preceded the British declaration of war was that it was very largely if not wholly free from jingoism and even from excitement. What phrases of bitterness or violence were used came mostly from the champions of peace. Those who were willing to accept the prospect of war showed little disposition to welcome it as an agreeable exercise or as a means of gratifying hatreds : and the words of the most "reactionary" of all the newspapers, written on August 4th, may fairly be cited as typical—"Thus England enters reluctantly upon the greatest of wars, united and resolved to do her duty." Many former non-interventionists had by that date come round, indignant at Germany's treatment of Belgium and convinced of the British government's right to protect her. That consideration it was, beyond dispute, which united public opinion.

Yet it would be as truly, if not as much, mistaken to assume that all the motives making for belligerence were absolutely altruistic, as to make the same assumption with regard to the reasons for opposing it. Very consciously in some minds, and less so in many others, there was a profound

THE SPIRIT OF THE NATION

FORWARD!



Forward to Victory
ENLIST NOW

conviction that England's need of the sea was so incomparably greater than that of any other country that she was in danger as soon as the naval power of another state was comparable with her own. For this reason a war with strong allies against the developing naval power of Germany was, of all possible wars, that to which the British were most easily reconcilable. It is not necessary to believe that King Edward or Sir Edward Grey had "encircled" Germany, or that the British could at any time have been persuaded, however well allied, to fall upon an innocent Germany for the mere advantage of destroying a rival. But it is certain that the spirit in which war was begun, though it owed something to indignation at German ruthlessness, something to a sentiment (whether quixotic or merely honest) of obligation to France, something to enthusiasm for innocent weakness felled and mangled in Belgium, something to a general abhorrence of force in politics, owed something also to a sense of release, a sense that

now Britannia might preserve her dominion over the waves by efforts more violent perhaps but less tedious and no less honourable than participating in a competition of military and naval preparation.

Another striking feature of the argumentation preliminary to war was the party division between the disputants. Almost all those who unconditionally opposed intervention until after the violation of Belgium, or later, were supporters of the Labour party or of the more Radical wing of the Liberals, and almost all the members of those sections did take that line. Why this was so need not be discussed: it may have been because these sections were more sensitive to the evils of war than their rivals, or because they had the more precious preoccupations, or because they were less influenced by corporate loyalties, or because their moral standards were higher, or because they were lower. However that may be, the results were of the



THE CALL TO ARMS
Two of the early recruiting posters.

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first importance : chief among them was the enormous significance thus attached to the Liberalism of the government. It has been shown how, as the crisis approached, Conservative journalists called for a united front, the prime minister postponed indefinitely the most controversial legislation, and Unionist leaders offered their support, so that finally all but a very small fraction of the community combined for the prosecution of the war.

This result was not achieved, however, without difficulty and effort. The appeal of the *Times* for a suspension of partisan activities had been stigmatized as madness, and Radicals had agitated for the completion

of the current legislative programme. When war was declared this attitude was for the most part abandoned : most progressives were willing to believe that war was justified by the violation of Belgium, and a majority even of those who were not held that the decision having been taken the time for controversy was past, so that by August 5th it was possible to speak without much hypocrisy or inaccuracy of a united nation. It is difficult to doubt that this unification would have been slower and less nearly absolute if the opponents of war had been also the opponents of the party in power.



VIOLETION OF BELGIUM: RUINS OF LOUVAIN
Showing the roofless Church of St. Pierre and the Hôtel de Ville.

From a Photograph by Newspaper Illustrations.



THE NAVY AT WORK

H.M.S. *Lark* escorting a Channel steamer in the early days of the War.

From a Photograph by Alfieri.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST WINTER

IT has been seen that the British people, and not less the British government, had been to the last extremely doubtful whether they were to take part in the war which the condition of Europe for a generation had been preparing, and which the fevered diplomacy of a month had been rapidly and evidently bringing nearer. What factors of that condition it was especially which resulted in war, whether the mutual fear of Slav and Teuton, or the capitalist desire for territory to exploit, or German militarism, or French vindictiveness, or British navalism, is not here to be inquired, nor whether the war as and when it came might not have been avoided if some man or some men had been better or wiser. Certainly neither the British government nor any considerable section of British opinion had during that generation wavered in devotion to peace, nor could either have been persuaded into any war which

it did not believe to be defensive and necessary.

In the last days of peace, when the necessity for the gravest of all political decisions was becoming plainly and continuously more urgent, the supporters of unconditional neutrality tried to give depth to their clamour by asserting that they had behind them the majority, and even the overwhelming majority, of the public. Such assertions are difficult to test. The government declared beforehand and at the time and afterwards that its hands were free, and that it must keep them free just because its action required continuous public approval. It is clear that the Unionist opposition, the official representative of roughly half Great Britain, approved of intervention in certain contingencies which it thought extremely probable, and which, in fact, by August 4th had arisen; a considerable section, as soon as Belgian neutrality was in question a large majority,

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of Liberals shared this view, and so did some Socialists, though of an eccentric kind. It is probable that the general sentiment was even more overwhelmingly on this side than would appear from a study of politicians and journalists. Men who voted for X because he had an apostolic fervour for Free Trade or a whole-souled passion for the Insurance Act, or a monomaniac detestation of capitalism, were much

can be no doubt that the government was genuinely anxious to be sure of national support before it took its decision, though it was aware that if once war were declared, then the my-country-right-or-wrong type of patriotism would be indefinitely strengthened; and it is reasonable to suppose that it believed itself to have caught, and to be acting on, the tone of popular feeling. This supposition is strengthened by the nervous



THE GERMAN BATTLE-CRUISER *GOEBEN*

The escape of this vessel in the Mediterranean, to take refuge at Constantinople, helped to bring Turkey into the war as an ally of the Central Powers. She is here shown flying the Turkish flag after her "sale" to that power.

more likely themselves to change the proportions of their interests than was X.

It is always easy to claim that, in spite of votes or demonstrations or newspapers or other tests, public opinion is really on this side or that, so easy that as a rule it is the worst of arguments. Yet when there is a deep and genuine interest in a great question, it frequently happens that the popularity of one answer to it can be felt though it cannot be proved. No one would now deny, for instance, that popular feeling was, on the whole, against the Insurance Act. In this case of peace or war there was a question much more vital, much more national, and much less complicated by personal and party considerations. There

eagerness with which the non-interventionists in the first days of August insisted no less that wars always became popular than that the prospect of war was unpopular. Indeed it may quite fairly be argued (and the writer believes) that the mind of the public was made up quite as soon as the mind of the government, and that though there was much dread of the evils of war, yet there was in the last days of peace even more anxiety lest our rulers should over-estimate them.

However that may be, it is undisputed that as soon as war was declared, it met with almost unanimous acceptance, and with approval so nearly unanimous as to enable the government immediately to throw into the scale all available British resources:

NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS

what those resources were, what their effect, and what the reaction of the British people to that effect, must next be considered.

The mightiest weapon of war of which immediate use could be made was the navy. It has been shown that, by a combination of good luck with promptness on the part of the admiralty, this weapon was, in so far as the necessities of the conflict had been

Austrian commerce had altogether disappeared from the seas, while that of Britain was proceeding as freely as ever, and more unchallenged, with only the slight handicap of a small increase in insurance premiums.

These results were achieved with proportionally little in the way of naval action, of which in home waters the most important were the successful cruiser action on August



THE BATTLE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Invincible and Inflexible steaming out of Port Stanley in chase of von Spee's squadron.

From a Water-colour Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

correctly foreseen, absolutely ready. So, or almost so, was the conception of its task, which was to make the seas of the world passable for the ships of Britain and her allies, and impassable for those of her enemies: "almost," because as to the treatment of neutrals with respect to blockade and contraband the directors of our policy were not clear.

In that task the navy was in the first months of the war employed with great and continually increasing success. In a few days the Expeditionary Force, Britain's first contribution to the land war, had been transported to France safely, and even unthreatened; very little later German and

28th, in the Heligoland Bight, and considerable though not-disquieting losses by mine and submarine. Of much more serious significance was the escape from the Mediterranean to Constantinople of both the German battle-cruiser *Goeben* and the cruiser *Breslau*, a disaster which perhaps hastened the accession to the hostile alliance of the Turkish Empire, with its incalculable effect in lengthening and aggravating the war. Otherwise the Mediterranean was as fully controlled by the Entente as the Channel, and provided as safe a passage for French as the Channel for British troops.

In the outer seas the first and most urgent need was to protect British commerce from

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cruiser warfare: this danger proved much less serious than had been feared, the only German ship to do any very serious damage being the light cruiser *Emden*, detached from the China squadron, which sank seventeen vessels before she was herself put out of action on November 9th. The main China Squadron was taken by Admiral von Spee to the coast of Chile, where it sank the

fighting force, the destruction of the hostile force. The failure was no doubt one of uncontrollable circumstance, but to the ordinary citizen it was more noticeable than all the naval success; the more so because his training and tradition inclined him to attribute to the British navy not merely invincibility, but almost omnipotence; and although great efforts were made to convince



THE DOGGER BANK BATTLE

Lion, Tiger and Princess Royal in chase.

From a Water-colour Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

cruisers *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* in November, but only to be itself destroyed by a superior force under Admiral Sturdee on December 7th. This was the end of German surface craft farther from home than the North Sea, except for the *Moewe* and *Wolf*, which did some damage to commerce in 1916 and 1917.

Of the first phase of the war, then, it may be said that the navy had performed its proper function rather more completely than could fairly have been expected, and with no losses which considerably impaired its future efficiency. At the same time it had, however blamelessly, done little towards accomplishing the ultimate task of any

him that, in the words of the first lord of the admiralty, we were enjoying all the advantages of command of the sea without having fought a battle, yet the appetite for something dramatic and conclusive remained, and was on the same occasion somewhat sharpened by the promise that if the German ships did not come out and fight they should be dug out like rats in a hole. Moreover, this longing for a capital and resounding success was fostered by the impunity of the first two German raids on the east coast, which did considerable though not military damage; nor was it altogether removed by the partial success of the Dogger Bank action (January, 1915), when the *Blücher* was sunk. On the

KITCHENER'S ADMONITION TO THE TROOPS

whole, however, the impatience for another Trafalgar remained hopeful rather than censorious, and implied no want of trust in the fleet. In contrast to this, the demand for a tightening of the blockade was from the first, and increasingly, couched in terms of censure on policy and administration. This is a matter to which more attention must be paid later.

Even in the first phase of the war the British effort was not limited to the sea: but its extension to the land was not a matter of course. It has been shown that in the discussions which preceded the British entry into the war arguments implying military action by large numbers of British subjects were almost wholly absent; and that Sir Edward Grey did not on August 3rd contemplate such action is proved by his declaration that the choice between belligerence and neutrality would but little affect our sufferings. In the cabinet and outside it there were men whole-heartedly eager for victory who yet considered that not a British soldier should be landed on the Continent.

On August 5th this view was rejected, when the cabinet, afforded with naval and military experts, resolved to support the French left with the whole of the regular army in England, six divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, the admiralty accepting responsibility for the safety of the British Isles thus denuded of first-line troops. This decision has been attributed by one of those who made it to the facts that it fitted a prepared plan, indeed the only prepared plan, and that it was called for by all military opinion¹: it may be that it was no less influenced by the general feeling of British citizens that France and Britain must succeed or fail together, and that every British effort must be made. It was carried out with complete success, the first four divisions being in France by August 16th. Of the character of these divisions there have been many accounts, all of which agree, and the best evidence is their achievement, of whose main features a short account must be given. Not least of their glories is to have inspired at the setting-out one of the most candid and simple admonitions, and by their bearing to

have deserved the noblest epitaph, bestowed on any army. The admonition was addressed to them by Lord Kitchener, who on August



LORD KITCHENER

Appointed Secretary of State for War, August, 1914.

From a Photograph by Newspaper Illustrations.

5th had become secretary of State for war, and this is what he wrote:

"You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King to help our French comrades against the invasion of a common enemy.

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You have to perform a task which will need your courage, your energy, your patience.

"Remember that the honour of the British army depends on your individual conduct. It will be your duty, not only to set an ex-

ample in showing yourself in France and Belgium in the true character of a British soldier.

"Be invariably courteous, considerate and kind. Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon looting as a disgraceful act.

You are sure to meet with a welcome, and to be trusted. Your duty cannot be done unless your health is sound. So keep constantly on your guard against any excesses. In this new experience you may find temptations in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations, and while treating all women with perfect courtesy, you should avoid any intimacy.

"Do your duty bravely.

"Fear God.

"Honour the King."

The German armies, heroically resisted and delayed for a brief but valuable period, overran Belgium. The French plan for a great attack in the south failed, and there was serious danger that France too would be overrun, Paris and the Channel ports captured, and the land war lost, probably beyond hope of retrieval. By the end of the year the French, Belgian and British armies were solidly entrenched in a continuous line from the sea to the Alps, a line which protected Paris and the ports, which for nearly four years proved tenable, though only just tenable, and which for over three years remained essentially unchanged, defending the Western and blockading the Central Powers till a war of

movement became practicable again. This stabilization of the war was the effect of the first campaign, which saved the Allies from immediate defeat and gave them the chance of ultimate victory: in that campaign the British Expeditionary Force played a part which cannot be too highly honoured,



SIR JOHN FRENCH (AFTERWARDS EARL FRENCH OF YPRES)
Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force to France.

From a Photograph by C. Vandyk, Ltd.

ample of discipline and perfect steadiness under fire, but also to maintain the most friendly relations with those whom you are helping in this struggle. The operations in which you are engaged will, for the most part, take place in a friendly country, and you can do your own country no better service than

RETREAT FROM MONS



THE RETREAT FROM MONS TO MEAUX, SEPTEMBER 6, 1914

From a Drawing by G. F. Morrell. By courtesy of "The Graphic."

although its relative importance has been very often exaggerated.

The main heads of the British contribution were Mons, Le Cateau, the Aisne, the Marne, and Ypres: to most readers the very names will recall the feats. The battle of Mons began on August 23rd; its strategic importance was that it was one of the first and one of the chief factors in preventing the defeat of France, threatened by the French failure in Lorraine and the German success in Flanders; its essence as a feat of arms was that 70,000 men and 300 guns checked and frustrated

the enemy's 600 guns and 160,000 men. The general situation caused it to be followed by a retreat: in this operation of withdrawing in the face of superior hostile forces, the most difficult in war, the British army bore itself with no less gallantry and skill than in the battle; moreover, it gave proof of endurance, perhaps the hardest of all virtues to keep, and the one on which the war was to make the heaviest demands. At Le Cateau, Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, judging a stand necessary to make possible the continuance of the retreat, turned and repulsed with 55,000 men

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the 140,000 of General von Kluck, at the expense of 8,000 casualties and 36 guns.²

The allied retreat ended behind the Marne : on September 4th General Joffre issued orders for a counter-attack which was to be the first allied success, and the most decisive till the days of ultimate victory. Meanwhile the British command was depressed ; there were thoughts of withdrawal as far as the Seine, as far as Orleans, the Loire, Bordeaux, even across the Channel. This depression was natural : in some cases it was exaggerated, but the exaggerations were not allowed to influence decisions, and they were not shared (nor, indeed, was that degree of depression which was reasonable) by the troops in general or by opinion at home. Few soldiers and probably not very many civilians would have unqualifiedly agreed with one widely-read commentator that "the German military reputation, damaged by General Pau in Alsace, had been shattered by Sir John French."³ Yet it was true that the German army, if neither its plan nor its reputation was shattered, was severely shaken in both. It was no longer doubtful that the British, their regular army at least, were in the actual business of marching and fighting something more than a match for the Germans. That certainty came most home to British bosoms, but it had its effect in allied and neutral and enemy consciousness as well. Besides, the success of the retreat had other effects than the moral and sentimental : when it began there had been a great chance that the German plan of a short smashing campaign in the west would prosper beyond even German hopes : by the time it was over that risk had been indefinitely reduced, and was about to be annulled by the victory of the Marne and by the fact that the Russian danger was developing more quickly than had been foreseen, so that already German troops were being sent eastward from France.

Effects of the Marne Victory

The Marne stopped the German advance and began the process, completed by the Belgian defence of the Yser and the British holding of Ypres, by which the war in the west was transformed into one enormous

siege, of unprecedented area and duration. It confirmed, as Ypres re-confirmed, the reputation for courage and efficiency of the British Expeditionary Force, and it both showed the need and created the possibility of a great expansion of that force till it should be able to take, instead of a quite subsidiary share in the avoidance of defeat, a nearly equal share in the securing of victory. Now there was time for the half-training of new divisions at home, and opportunity for the completion of their training on active service.

Ruin of the German Plans

Hardly less important to the British, and of even greater immediate significance to the alliance as a whole, was the re-establishment of the reputation of the French command. The plans with which it had begun the war had altogether failed, and their failure had gone near to involving utter defeat ; out of that failure they had now snatched a success which at last staved off disaster and gave the chance of victory. Before the war British experts had overrated both the French staff and the force at its disposal ; they had found some difficulty in indoctrinating with this estimate a public to which German efficiency was something of a boggy, and the French army a natural victim not merely from Crécy to Waterloo, but from Teutonic antiquity to Sedan. Alliances are almost as much endangered by such prejudices as by defeats. The Marne decided much : not least important of its decisions was that in the military sphere at least the western allies should trust each other, not absolutely indeed, but perhaps as nearly so as two sovereign nations ever can. But the importance of the Marne lies not only in being decisive, but also in seeming decisive. No one in October, 1914, least of all the British public, foresaw that for another four years the Allies were to besiege the Central Powers before they broke their defences ; but it was perceived at once that the character of the war was changed, that the German plan was ruined and its attack stopped : it was even asserted that with this failure had gone all prospect of final success—a prophecy which was to come too often too near disappointment. The Marne gave the British not only



"SHALLOW TRENCH" FIGHTING IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR

This remarkable photograph shows a German advance against British trenches—held by the King's Liverpool Regiment—near Ypres.

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confidence in their allies, but confidence in themselves. As a rule that confidence was not boastful or excessive, though a tactless insistence upon it was sometimes blamed for deficiencies in recruiting. Sometimes it was of the very worst kind, as when a popular newspaper printed (just before the very crisis of the Ypres battle) its war correspondent's statement that "the German right is smashed like a wineglass. The retreat is no less than a rout. . . The flooding of the German positions, a natural piece of generalship which German generalship seems most blunderingly to have overlooked, came only as a climax of disaster, not as the root cause. Their generals had butchered man after man, battalion after battalion, in striving to cross the Yser Canal by brute force, and all without success. They were lying like beaten dogs, licking their wounds, when the floods came upon them."⁴ But this sort of belittling of what remained to be done, contempt for the enemy, and insolent pleasure in his sufferings, were rare in the press, rarer in the public, and rarer still among the fighting men.

The Glory of the Old Army

Ypres closed the last German sally-port to the west, and may be taken as the crowning feat of the old army; that army was already largely altered in personnel by casualties and replacements, and was on the point of being enveloped in the new army that was being created for the war, of which, in spite of all changes of scale and composition, it was always the heart. What could be done it had done with perfection: what should be said of it has been said with perfection:⁵

"These, in the day when heaven was falling,
The hour when earth's foundations fled,
Followed their mercenary calling
And took their wages and are dead.

"Their shoulders held the sky suspended;
They stood, and earth's foundations stay;
What God abandoned, these defended,
And saved the sum of things for pay."

At Mons four divisions repulsed eight German divisions; at Coulommiers and La Ferté Gaucher (in the Marne battle) nine German divisions quite failed to hold five British; at the Ypres battle the Germans

had between Armentières and the sea just about twice as many men as the Allies, and more than that superiority in guns, and the most arduous part of the resistance to this pressure fell upon the British in the salient, where, for instance, at one time a single division held for nearly two days a front of eight miles against the attack of two army corps. There is some indication of the cost of this achievement in the order issued by Sir Henry Rawlinson to the Seventh Division (not part of the original expedition) on its withdrawal from the line: it then had of the 400 officers whom it brought from England only 44 left, and of the 12,000 men only 2,336.⁶

The "Experts" and the War

Ypres has become the central name in the British memory of the war, yet at the time the first battle there made on the public mind much less than its due effect. The ordinary citizen was inclined to believe that continental warfare was still as remote as in the days of Agincourt or Malplaquet, and public policy had fostered this delusion. During those first critical three months, when it was all the time a question whether France (for from the British point of view Paris and the Channel ports were France) could be saved, or whether the war in the west were to become a desperate struggle to win France back, the censorship, which had been properly imposed on military reports and discussions, was used after the first weeks most successfully to persuade public opinion to underestimate enormously both the magnitude of the issue and the probability that it would be unfortunate. Besides this, the most local and temporary allied successes were magnified into victories, and sometimes even structures of triumph were reared on no basis at all. Already, too, "experts" were explaining that the western campaign had settled down to a war of attrition, in which the Germans must necessarily suffer more than the Allies; and for the eastern campaign the phrase of "the Russian steam-roller" had already been invented and was inducing the comforting belief that the Russian armies had something of the irresistibility of fate and something of the grinding power

"BUSINESS AS USUAL"

of the mills of God. At the end of September the greatest of all the experts was attributing to their advance a speed "almost quicker than thought." A generation which in peace-time worshipped progress (a way, as was long ago pointed out, of trusting one's neighbours to do one's work) was being taught in war-time to trust specifically to an advance which did not need its propulsion. It is probable that the British people would have reacted in none but worthy ways to the full tale of disaster and danger: it is certain that its energies were rather relaxed than stimulated by premature prophecies of victory.

Another factor on the same side was the withholding, in an excessive care for concealing troop dispositions, of the names of units and individuals, which did much to starve the army of legitimate sentimental resources. Yet another was the repetition, in which more than one politician took a part, of the phrase "business as usual": this was harmless enough so long as it meant that those who were not engaged with more urgent employments had best do their ordinary work as well as they could, but there was a danger lest it should convey the impression that Britain had only to remain cheerfully unchanged while the cosmic process defeated her enemies, and especially lest it should persuade traders that the capture of Germany's markets was as good as the defeat of her armies.

"Kitchener's Army"

It was the inestimable service of Lord Kitchener to persuade his countrymen of the falsity of such views.⁷ Immediately on his entry into the cabinet he insisted on the necessity of envisaging a long struggle and on the duty of the British Empire to be prepared to raise armies of millions, and to maintain them for years. The decision had already been taken to intervene in the continental war in a subsidiary way: Kitchener persuaded government and people that they must intervene as principals. He did this, so far at least as the people were concerned, by no force of argument or eloquence, but by the mere weight of his prestige and reputation of his judgment. He set himself

to make first six, then twelve, and in the end twenty-four new divisions,—“Kitchener” divisions, as they were called. It is impossible to doubt that he performed this feat better and more quickly than it could by any means have been performed without him, or that he made one serious mistake when he preferred to put his main effort into entirely new formations rather than into expansion of the existing Territorial cadres.

Fallacious Views of War

Besides their historical immunity from invasion, their excessive reliance on the navy, and their optimistic view of the opening campaigns, there were other reasons why the British were not without difficulty persuaded of their duty to provide men by the million for periods by the year. Opinion had been long and increasingly influenced by the doctrine that wars were without exception economically unprofitable to all the participants, and it had been often added that between European powers at least wars were for the future impossible, or extremely improbable. Now that war was here the same teachers, and many others also, used the same and some additional arguments to demonstrate that the war must be short. It was said that Europe in the twentieth century was kept alive by an economic machine so delicate, so complicated, so omnipresent, that the smallest shock would throw it out of gear, and that once out of gear it would perform its functions so extremely ill that, unless the interruption were quickly ended, every state would be fatally shattered and every population intolerably distressed. War between the powers was the greatest imaginable shock, and therefore its duration must be extremely short.

No one now would deny that the war did damage the economic structure of Europe, nor that that damage is, in the exact sense, immense: but it was not immediate, or at least not in any degree comparable with what had been predicted. Modern complexities proved, for the time at least, whatever the ultimate cost, tougher and more elastic than the simplicities of other times; never were ploughshares so numerous and so easily



YPRES

The bastion that barred the road to Calais.

From a Drawing by G. F. Morrell. By courtesy of "The Graphic."



The Rue Carton, Ypres, 1918.



The Lille Gate, Ypres.

BATTLE-SCARRED YPRES

From Drawings by Adrian Hill, in the Imperial War Museum.

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beaten into swords, never was so high a proportion of man-power so exclusively devoted to inflicting and avoiding death, never did nations with such dreadful pre-occupations suffer so little in their clothing, feeding, and housing. What was more, the nerves also of twentieth-century men proved as patient and as strong as those of their forefathers, so that the prophets of a short war were no less deceived by the other dogma on which they principally relied. Yet these prophecies were not without effect, and it is possible that that effect could have been cancelled by nothing else but Kitchener's conviction and prestige; especially since there was not wanting high military opinion that the war would be over by the end of the year if only all available reinforcements were hurried at once to France, instead of being kept in England as the nucleus of the new armies.⁸

Incidence of Recruiting

All these reasons may explain, if indeed there is anything to explain, why recruiting did not proceed at a greater rate; but the truth is that the rate at which it did proceed was great enough for admiration, and in the beginning, at least, was limited more by the small scale of British military organization than by any lack of willingness to serve; so that on September 11th the war office deliberately slackened the flow of recruits by raising the standard of physique. By September 15th there had been over half a million enlistments, representing 2.41 per cent. of the population in England, 2.79 in Scotland, .93 in Ireland, and 1.94 in Wales. The army establishment, which on the outbreak of war was raised by 500,000, was again raised by the same amount, but by the end of October there was a great falling off in the daily average of enlistments. This was partly due to reasons already indicated, partly to the fact that the early flood of recruits had been too much for the authorities, so that there were difficulties in the way of mere enrolling, deficiencies of lodging, and an absence of equipment.

As the then first lord of the admiralty has said, "Apart from the exiguous stores held by the regular army, there was liter-

ally nothing. The small scale of our military forces had led to equally small factories for war material. There were no spare rifles, there were no extra guns, and the modest supplies of shells and ammunition began immediately to flash away with what seemed appalling rapidity. Many months must elapse, even if the best measures were taken, before new sources of supply even on a moderate scale could be opened up. One was now to learn for the first time that it took longer to make a rifle than a gun; and rifles were the cruellest need of all. We had nothing but staves to put in the hands of the eager men who thronged the recruiting stations."

How these deficiencies were supplied cannot just now be inquired; their relevance at this point consists in their effect upon enlistment. It had become unsatisfactory; it remained so in November, although on the 17th Mr. Lloyd George told the House of Commons that there were 2,000,000 men serving the country under arms, and a few days later Lord Kitchener announced that the number of enlistments was about 30,000 a week. But on the whole it may be held that the voluntary system did all that could fairly be expected, and produced as many recruits as could profitably be used, until nearly the middle of 1915, when the formation of new divisions began to be held up, and even the provision of drafts for some of the units already in France to be endangered.

Labour and the War

Enlistment was not the only matter in which the utilization of British resources was affected by devotion to individual choice: while the workmen at the French Creusot munition factory, for instance, were submitted to military discipline, British labour had as much freedom, and as little, as ever, except in so far as it was subject to a more active and a differently motivated public opinion.

In the years before the war there had been a great strengthening of the trade unions, so that by 1913 the 1,135 unions had a membership of just on four millions, or more than double what it had been in 1899.⁹ It has been seen that in the last days of July and

THE WAR AND FOOD PRICES

the early days of August their accustomed spokesmen had strongly protested against war; but once the die was cast, although there were still some Socialists who were opposed to the war or to all war, it is probable that trade unionists were as anxious for victory as the general body of their fellow-citizens, and their leaders for the most part

though Mr. MacDonald, and indeed almost all the Socialist leaders, including the Independent Labour Party, were very soon convinced of the absolute indispensability of allied victory.

The immediate economic effects of the war were rises in food prices and a decrease of employment.¹⁰ Food prices were going up



THE RESPONSE TO LORD KITCHENER'S APPEAL: A SCENE AT THE CENTRAL RECRUITING STATION, 1914

By September 15th there had been over half a million enlistments, and in November Mr. Lloyd George said there were two million men under arms.

From a Photograph by Alfieri.

set themselves, not to reverse or stultify the government's decision, but to safeguard the interests of manual workers while it was being put into effect: an activity which was especially superintended by the War Emergency Workers' National Committee, a body formed to speak for all the manifestations of the Labour movement. One immediate result of the abandonment of opposition to the war was the supersession of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as leader of the Labour party by Mr. Arthur Henderson,

as early as August 1st, and mounted quite sharply after August 3rd; on August 8th they reached the highest point for the month, being rather more than 15 per cent. higher than in July, and by the end of the month they were down again to about 10 per cent. above the July level. These fluctuations were purely factitious, the supply being as yet in no way impaired, but a perplexed public anxiously trying to be ready for the worst, and orthodox retailers not refusing to take so easy a profit. Citizens in general

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soon began to see that it was neither very wise nor very admirable to endeavour to insure against national disaster by filling a drawer with dried beans and a shelf with tinned salmon; more still was done by the government's fixing of prices, and most by the perception that no immediate and catastrophic interruption of food supplies was likely. Still, there was interference enough to keep prices continually rising, due to

were absorbed by the army and industry was turned over to the production of things directly or indirectly of military value, employment rapidly increased; improvement began at the end of August, and went on fast till by the close of the year employment was at least normal in most trades, and a great deal better than that in some: in the case of women the process naturally lagged somewhat, but there too it may be said to have



CANADIAN TROOPS REVIEWED BY THE KING ON SALISBURY PLAIN BEFORE LEAVING FOR FRANCE

government purchases, the increase of earning power measured in money, and the impeding of foreign sources of supply. Prices went up slowly in September, October and November, then quicker, so that at the beginning of February, 1915, they were 22 per cent. above the July level, and for the next months the movement kept fairly steady, till at the end of July the increase was 34 per cent. There for the time prices may be left while some attention is paid to other economic consequences of the state of war.

It was generally presumed that one consequence would be an extension of unemployment, and during the first month such was indeed the case, though not quite wholly for reasons connected with the war. Not only was the amount of unemployment increased in most industries, but also there was a great deal of short time. As men, however,

been complete some time towards the middle of 1915.

The period immediately preceding the war had been marked with a great deal of industrial unrest, and threatened with more; the first months of belligerence witnessed a great appeasement. In July there had been strikes involving 98,112 workers, in August the number involved was only 2,004; in July 1,327,000 working days were lost in this way, 526,900 in August, in September only 229,800. The number of disputes rose in the later months, but their volume was insignificant, and in December there were practically no strikes at all. This disappearance of strikes was due largely to a desire not to embarrass the nation in a difficult hour—a desire highly creditable to men almost all of whom believed, and most of them justly, that they were being paid



INDIAN CAVALRY IN FRANCE

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.



AUSTRALIAN TROOPS LEAVING MELBOURNE

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

less than they deserved, and especially less than they could exact with the weapon of the strike. This virtue did not prove indestructible, whether its collapse is to be attributed rather to the weight of time or to the imposition of excessive and unwarrantable strains.

Already in August there was criticism from some sections of the Labour movement. The settlements arrived at had been made,

not even the certainty of gratitude, from the other. It was argued that the Labour leaders ought to have exacted guarantees about the rates of wages and about trade union participation in the control of industry and the administration of relief before they gave up the only weapon with which they could coerce the government and the employers. Nor were the preachers of this doctrine at a loss for practical grievances with which to



INDIAN TROOPS IN ACTION NEAR YPRES, APRIL, 1915

From a Drawing by A. C. Michael.

it was said, and at least in some cases truly, without consultation of the rank and file. On August 24th a conference called by the joint board of the Trades Union Congress, the General Federation of Trade Unions, and the Labour party, resolved, "That an immediate effort be made to terminate all existing trade disputes, whether strikes or lock-outs, and whenever new points of difficulty arise during the war period a serious attempt should be made by all concerned to reach an amicable settlement before resorting to a strike or lock-out." This action was clearly open to the criticism, from which it was not long immune, that it was an unconditional truce, one side surrendering its vantage ground without receiving anything,

point their moral. It was true that the National Relief Fund proved more than ample to provide for emergency relief, but it could well be argued that such a function should not have been left to voluntary effort at all, and that the allocation of relief was inquisitorial, humiliating, and inadequate. General experience shows, indeed, that of the persons willing to help their fellows a distressingly large proportion is anxious to control them, and it was a fair complaint, for instance, that some local relief committees gave food tickets instead of money, thus arrogating a power to arrange the diet of the recipients.

More serious was the insistence that the trade unions should be given a large share



THE EVOLUTION OF "TRENCH UNIFORM" DURING THE FIRST WINTER IN FRANCE
From Photographs by the Press Photographic Agency.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

in the control of industry, and more still the fact that wages did not rise along with food prices. On the whole in 1914 they did not rise at all; by February, 1915, there was a sharp upward tendency, which continued in March and April, and was accentuated in May; over all the first year of war 2,336,700 people had had their weekly wages increased by £12,585,¹¹ and their earnings by something more, because employment was steady and overtime common. But probably the increase did not counterbalance the rise in food prices, and, as will have been noticed, certainly not in the first half of the year, when wages were almost stationary.

Add to all these considerations the workers' justifiable belief that capitalists were doing very well, together with their perception that an industrial truce of years is of a different kind from one of months, and it is not surprising that February, 1915, saw a recrudescence of unrest, notably over wages in the Clyde yards and on the railways, and over "dilution" in the Armstrong-Whitworth works at Elswick. For the time these disputes were tolerably patched up, but their root causes were not touched. To attempt a solution valid for the duration of the war was one of the most pressing duties of the new government formed in the middle of 1915; how it set about the task will be indicated later.

Enemy Hopes of Dominion Dissensions

Some attempt has now been made to sketch the main lines of what the British people did and suffered in the first nine or ten months of the war; before going on to the next period, something must be said of the British subjects overseas. It had been presumed by our enemies, and feared by some of our friends, that of the dominions beyond the seas some (including Ireland) would be a handicap to the Empire at war, and the rest useless, owing to their remoteness, their developing independence, and their lack of military organization. These hopes and fears proved unfounded, or at least ill-founded, and especially so in the first year of war, when they mattered most. In the days when the issues of peace and war hung trembling in the

balance, it became clear that the dominions were determined if war should come to use all their available resources to strengthen the British effort, and even that they were in general more anxious lest the home government should dread war overmuch, than lest it should fail in will or power to avoid it.

Enthusiastic Support from Dominions

The declaration of war was no sooner known than offers of assistance, official and unofficial, began to pour in; and in the month that followed they were so effectively made good that, apart from innumerable private contributions of men and money and goods, by the end of September, Canada, for instance, had sent a corps of 30,000 men across the Atlantic, to be followed later by many thousands more. Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies, every dominion and every colony, all sent forces greater or smaller to fight by the side of the British army. They took a great share besides in the operations which had very soon almost, and eventually quite, wiped out the German colonial empire; and Canada, Australia and New Zealand contributed to British naval power as well. Most striking of all was the response of India. Of all portions of the British Empire, India had seemed most certain to be a source of weakness in time of danger; yet the outbreak of war united her as she had never been united before, and made her more than ever conscious of her membership of the British Empire and contented with it. It is true that this unification and reconciliation were not to prove absolute and eternal, nor to solve all the problems of Indian government and Anglo-Indian relations, but they were none the less real and valuable; not only was it possible to reduce the British garrison in the peninsula, but also considerable Indian contingents were early employed in France, and later in Mesopotamia and Palestine.

It will be remembered that on the eve of war the foreign secretary, looking around the lowering prospect for one bright spot, had found it in Ireland, and that the leader of the Nationalist party was able to promise the government assistance in the execution of their policy. This was very far from what

THE SOUTH AFRICAN RISING

Germany had hoped, and it was to be long before her hopes were at all, and then but very imperfectly, fulfilled. Meanwhile the brightness that had been described was to shine less brilliantly and less steadily than both Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Redmond had hoped. Outside Unionist sections of the population recruiting in Ireland was never good, and after a time became very bad. This has been attributed to the ineptitude of the war office, not without some justice, but was due far more to much deeper causes, and especially to the supersession, growing continually more complete but remaining unbelievable till suddenly it made itself undeniable, of parliamentary nationalism by revolutionary Sinn Fein. Nevertheless, it was a great gain that at the beginning of the war Ireland was something of a help, for some time nothing of a drain, and only for one short moment much of a danger.

There was one other part of the empire on which the hopes of its enemies were fixed ; that was South Africa. Since the peace of Vereeniging and the establishment of responsible government great progress—much more than could have been predicted—had been made in the conciliation of the Boers.

Still, it could not be said to be complete, and might not unreasonably be expected to be illusory. Hopes based on such calculations were at first deceived ; South Africa as a whole resembled other dominions in sense of unity and wish to help. But it contained irreconcilable elements, and on its borders lay enemy territory. Thus it happened that Maritz, an officer of the Union forces who had fought on the Boer side, was able in October to raise rebellion with German assistance : in a very short time he was defeated, but meanwhile a more serious revolt was threatening elsewhere. General Hertzog, the leader of the party of Dutch ascendancy, had held aloof from Maritz's invasion of the Union with foreign forces, but a few days before that invasion was definitely crushed, a group of distinguished Boer generals—Beyers, Kemp, De Wet—revolted independently. The burghers for the most part stood by Botha and the Union ; in a few days the rising was quite clearly a failure, and in a few weeks the last embers had been stamped out. So ended the first (and, except for the Irish rebellion of 1916, the last) attempt to disturb by force the unity of the British Empire at war.



THE BATTLEFIELD OF YPRES

From a Painting by Sir D. Y. Cameron, R.A., in the Imperial War Museum.



FEEDING THE GUNS

An ammunition refilling point near Albert.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

CHAPTER IV

MUNITIONS AND GALLIPOLI

THE first months of war had swept away impartially the plans of attack by which the French and the Germans alike had hoped to snatch a favourable decision in the west. By the spring of 1915 it was clear that it was not enough for the western allies merely to hold their own till the Russians marched into Berlin; and, indeed, it is probable that if at that time the Germans had been content to hold their eastern front, they might then have launched in the west an offensive which could not be resisted. On the other hand, while the French and the British might now hope to repel any renewed German assault, yet they had no chance of breaking the German line without a great expansion of their forces, and especially of their equipment, and without a vastly greater expenditure than had at first been contemplated of time, treasure, and blood.

The war was to be both more protracted and more intense than the political and economic experts had believed possible. Among all the combatant nations it was to the British people most of all that this intensification was to apply; and as the first winter wearily passed and the first spring brought little renewal of hope, the British people became aware of it. This was the fundamental reason for the fall of the Liberal government in the middle of 1915.

At the very beginning of the war the idea had been mooted of a cabinet representing all parties; neither the prime minister nor his colleagues had thought it worth considering, and so the war was waged by a government chosen to preserve Free Trade, to give Home Rule to Ireland, and to reform the House of Lords, the only changes being the resignations of Lord Morley and Mr.

KITCHENER'S PREDOMINANCE

Burns, who would not accept such a diversion of their talents and energies, and the introduction of Lord Kitchener. It is hardly too much to say that it was this latter fact which made the continuance of the cabinet possible and saved it from a speedy ending. If the cabinet reassured the Liberal party, Kitchener reassured the nation ; if the cabinet deserves the credit for the efficiency and preparedness of the navy and the expeditionary force, it was Kitchener who from the first insisted that this was not nearly enough, and who made practicable Britain's participation on the Continent as a great military power.

A cabinet representing directly less, and indirectly not much more, than half of a population divided into factions which were but lately almost literally at each other's throats, was not the ideally best government for a State at war. It was possible because of the loyalty of its opponents and

the reinforcement of the great national figure who was universally regarded as more valuable to the conduct of the war than any other man, at first even than any other combination of men. As the nation's representative on a committee in essence partisan, however patriotic in intention, Kitchener was in a position of almost unlimited power ; in cabinet discussions his professional eminence, added to this popular position, raised him almost above argument ; in the event of serious parliamentary attack upon the cabinet it was certain that he would be excepted from invective ; what was well done in the war might naturally be attributed to the great soldier, what was ill done to the politicians. This consideration alone unfitted the government to survive very many months of war, unless it could avoid all occasion not only of just but even of plausible criticism.



YPRES

From a Water-colour Drawing by Ian Strang, in the Imperial War Museum.

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Occasions for criticism were not long wanting. Of the two which first arose—censorship and recruiting—some mention has already been made. Censorship was absolutely necessary, and in a high degree successful; but even if it had made no mistakes it would have been extremely irksome to newspapers; and although on the whole it was exercised with great impartiality and intelligence it was bound to make mistakes, some of which were, and more seemed, ridiculous. Here was the organ most apt to criticize strongly tempted to do so; the temptation was all the stronger because the submission to the censorship of articles not telegraphically transmitted was voluntary, so that the more scrupulous an editor was, the more hampered was the utterance of his paper. It was not without significance that the first sense of grievance should have been felt by the press, which was more read than ever before, and whose comparative importance was heightened by the muffling of parliamentary eloquence.

Public Opinion and the War

More serious were the complaints about recruiting; what some of them were has already been shown, and how they were connected with criticisms of the censorship, but the two fundamental charges have not yet been touched upon. They were, first that the whole principle of voluntary enlistment was wrong, and secondly that the mere necessity of recruits by the half-million was a condemnation of the government. Of these the objection to voluntary enlistment was by far the more vocal, but as there will be other opportunities for discussing it a bare mention may here suffice. The second objection was much less explicit, indeed hardly conscious; but its repercussions were various and considerable. There was the feeling that a government which had always refused to contemplate large-scale intervention in continental warfare was imperfectly qualified to direct such intervention now that it had been resolved on; also the pre-war orthodoxy, which taught that peace could always be had for the wishing, left a legacy of uncomfortable misgivings about British efforts to maintain peace, and

on the other hand an over-comfortable assurance that victory too could be had in the same way. A further weakness was the wide divergence between the motives actuating the ordinary citizen and those to which appeal was made by the individuals and the newspapers chiefly instrumental in putting and keeping the government in power. The mind of the ordinary citizen is, with the spirit of the age and the will of God, the most suspicious of all dialectical resources. In this case it is indispensable, and may be checked by memory and probability. The average Englishman regarded the war as one waged to protect the security and legitimate position of his country against the threats of a state which had gained much and hoped to gain all by the unscrupulous use of military power; he was confirmed in this view by his knowledge that the other side had broken treaties and refused discussion. He thought, too, that Austria's treatment of Serbia, and even more, Germany's of Belgium, were unwarrantable and ought to be punished. He did not suppose that European peoples and governments were divided into two classes, the one altogether meritorious, and the other absolutely damnable, nor that historically war was an expedient peculiar to the Teutons, but he was convinced that France and Russia were less responsible for the conditions which had brought about this war than Germany and Austria, and very soon also that German soldiers and sailors were more inclined to cruelty than others. Perhaps he felt, dimly, that he belonged to a nation in which the people was more important than the state, and that his enemies represented not only a material danger but an opposite idea.

False Ideas of War Motives

All this was not enough for the leaders of progressive thought. From the first they were "quite clear in their minds as to the real enemy," they had "no quarrel with the German people"; indeed they were "fighting for the emancipation of Germany as well as for the liberties of Europe," without any sense of impertinence. Not only was the notion of making the world safe for democracy already conceived, but so was the



THE COALITION CABINET (formed in May, 1915)

Arthur Henderson (Lab.)	T. McKinnon Wood (Lib.)	Winston Churchill (Lib.)	A. Bonar Law (Union.)	Lord Kitchener	H. H. Asquith (Lib.)	Lord Crewe (Lib.)	Lord Lewis Harcourt (Lib.)	R. McKenna (Lib.)	Sir S. Buckmaster (Lib.)	Sir J. Simon (Lib.)	W. Runciman (Lib.)	Aug. Birrell (Lib.)	Walter Long (Union.)	Lord Selborne (Union.)
Austen Chamberlain (Union.)					D. Lloyd George (Lib.)				Sir E. Grey (Lib.)	Sir E. Carson (Union.)		Sir E. Carson (Union.)		Lord Curzon (Union.)
											A. J. Balfour (Union.)			Lord Lansdowne (Union.)

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idea, and the very phrase, of "the war to end war," and the belief that here was a golden opportunity for the general rearrangement of the world.¹ It is not suggested that these ideas were hypocritical nor that they were quite peculiar to Liberal thinkers; the important thing about them is that they were in essence false; these were not the motives which had brought the British government to acquiesce in the necessity of war, nor the objects with which the British people was working and fighting for victory. This falsity was to have bitter results at the end of the war; at the beginning it tended to set a gulf between the government and its wonted apologists, and between the latter and the mass of the people.

Slackness of the Blockade

Another source of weakness to the government resided in its blockade policy. From the beginning all German ships had been stopped, of course, and all neutral ships carrying contraband. When on January 26th, 1915, the German government announced its intention of seizing all stocks of corn and flour and forbade private dealings in those commodities, they were treated as contraband. Germany replied by declaring against all British merchandise a war which, as it was to be waged by submarines, could not abide by the old rules (in the matter of rescuing crews, for instance), and by declaring the waters round these islands (except for the sea passage north of the Shetlands and the coastal waters of the Netherlands) a war area, in which all enemy merchant vessels "would be destroyed without its always being possible to warn the crew or passengers." To this the English rejoinder was made on March 1st, when Mr. Asquith announced that all ships of presumed enemy origin, ownership, or destination, including neutral vessels sailing from or to German ports, would be detained though not confiscated. There were some misgivings as to the propriety of this retaliatory measure, but much more serious complaints that for eight months the main British weapon had been very partially, and that even now it was not to be fully, employed. In its determination to prevent

German importation, direct or indirect, of any goods capable of being directly or indirectly useful to German military purposes, the British government was certainly permitting itself methods which international law could justify only as reprisals. German mine-laying, sinking of merchant ships with their crews, and submarine warfare even on neutrals, may be held to have rendered such reprisals legitimate; but they were bound to increase neutral irritation, and they did not allay British clamours for measures even more drastic. Why were copper and especially cotton still allowed to reach Germany? Such questions were used to swell the indictment of the government for slackness at least, if not for allowing itself to be the tool of something worse. Other counts in this indictment were the latitude left to enemy aliens, especially Germans naturalized and unnaturalized, and the government's alleged negligence of the wildly exaggerated spy menace.

The Government and Aliens

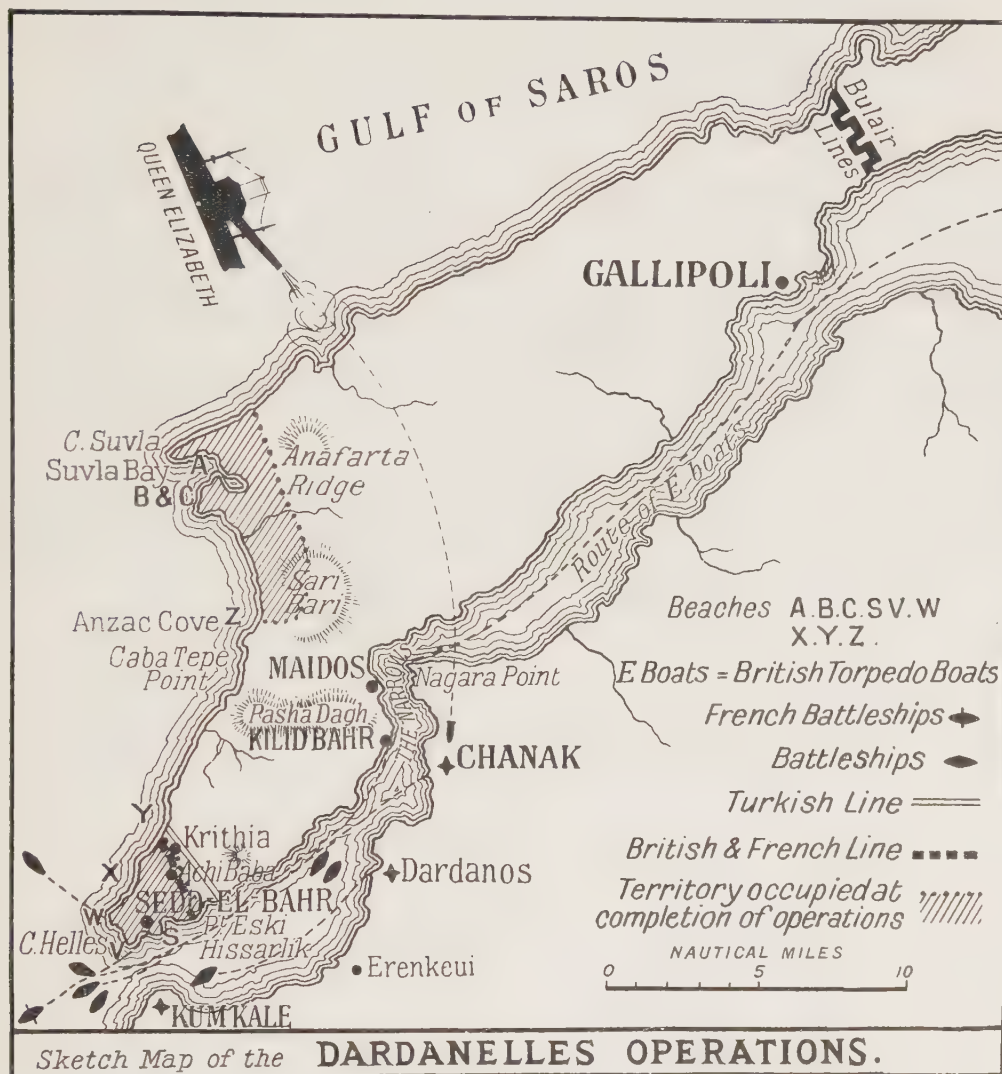
The aliens in general did no great harm, perhaps, but it was inevitable that they should be regarded with suspicion, and quite just that the government's reputation should suffer for the muddling and shilly-shallying in this connexion of both its policy and its administration, before a general internment was finally resolved on. One very humiliating consequence was that xenophobic agitation was given enough force to take effect just where it was most offensive or ridiculous: as, for instance, shops bearing German names were attacked; Prince Louis of Battenberg, an officer of proved competence and loyalty beyond suspicion, was impelled to resign his position in the admiralty; and restaurant-keepers changed the name of *Wiener Schnitzel* to Windsor steak. As to spies, their movements had been so well watched that the espionage system was smashed on the first day of war, nor did the efforts to re-establish it meet with much success; but spying is the activity most suited to excite the shrillest and silliest elements in the population, and some members of the government did give them an undeserved advantage by taking at

THE DARDANELLES VENTURE

first a superhumanly high line about the priority of Justice to Security, and about the unpleasantness of shedding blood.

In general the cause of the decline and fall of the Liberal government was the feeling

eternity, there was no valid excuse either in the shade of the House of Commons or in the glare of the journalistic forum: the two words to which there was no answer were *Shells* and *Gallipoli*.



that the war was longer and less fortunate than had been expected or was necessary, and that this disappointment was due in part to the inadequacy of the government: all the elements of weakness which have been suggested were causes or symptoms of this disappointment; it was finally made effective by two specific charges, against which, if there is any moral defence in the light of

As soon as it had become clear that victory was not to be had at the price of one campaign on the western front, ingenious minds in and behind the government set themselves to find some way round the trenches and barbed wire of France and Flanders. The seizure of Alexandretta (to cut Turkish communications in Syria), combined naval and military operations on the Flemish

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coast to outflank the German right, a landing in Pomerania to secure the same result more decisively, an attack on Austria by way of Salonika and Serbia, the building of land-ships to make trenches untenable, the paralyzing of Turkey and revivifying of Russia by forcing the Dardanelles and occupying Constantinople—all these plans were suggested during the winter of 1914-15, and the

same day the British government received from the Grand Duke Nicholas an urgent appeal to do something, anything, to divert Turkish forces from their dangerous pressure on the Russians in the Caucasus. Kitchener was clear that he had no troops to spare for the purpose, and inquired of Mr. Churchill whether the navy could do anything, in the Dardanelles for instance. Thus began that



NAVAL OPERATIONS AT THE DARDANELLES

Sedd-el-Bahr burning after bombardment by *Queen Elizabeth* and *Agamemnon*.

From a Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

three last were all to be tried in the course of time. It is the last of all that first claims attention.

This project began to take form and weight with the very beginning of 1915; a variety of causes converged towards this result.² On January 1st Mr. Lloyd George submitted to the war council a suggestion that in the early spring 600,000 men should be landed at Salonika to attack Austria in co-operation with the Serbians, Rumanians, Greeks, and probably Italians. This scheme was simultaneously being pressed in the French cabinet by Monsieur Briand, but was rejected by French military headquarters. On the

heroic tragedy whose playing took a whole year, in which none of the leading performers acted quite up to the scale of the piece, and almost none of the common players below it, and whose *dénouement* was that fifteen thousand of the common players passed through an earthly purgatory to a soldiers' paradise, and one of the principal performers from the presidency of the board of admiralty to the chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster.

One of the elements of the tragedy was the helplessness of the general staff: ³ partly because of the departure to France of its most influential members, partly because



BOMBARDING THE NARROWS, MARCH 18, 1915

From a Water-colour Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.



MUDROS HARBOUR, FROM THE FRENCH HOSPITAL



ACHI-BABA

The centre of the Turkish defences at Gallipoli.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

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THE RIVER CLYDE ON THE BEACH AT SEDD-EL-BAHR

The vessel was filled with troops, and run ashore under the fire of the Turkish guns.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

Kitchener's experience in Egypt and elsewhere tempted him and his unchallengeable position enabled him to centralize in himself its functions, partly because his colleague at the admiralty had immense energy and confidence, with some knowledge of strategy, and a great fondness for it, the military staff had very much less and the naval staff a good deal less than their due weight. For what was to be done the political chiefs were not without expert support ; but they did not make the best use of the best expert opinion.

Grandiose schemes of moving armies from France and of Greek, Rumanian, Italian, and Serbian co-operation were very early seen to be impracticable, and on January 3rd Mr. Churchill enquired of Vice-Admiral Carden (commanding at the Dardanelles) whether he considered the forcing of the passage by the older battleships a practicable operation.⁴ Admiral Carden re-

plied that though he did not think the Dardanelles could be rushed, they might be gradually forced, and on January 13th the war council authorized the preparation of detailed plans by the admiralty. Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson were present, but conceived it their duty to remain silent as they were not asked for their opinion. Meanwhile it had been resolved to use the new *Queen Elizabeth* with her fifteen-inch guns, as well as the older battleships. Henceforth Mr. Churchill was heart and soul in the scheme, though at the beginning he felt, and said, that one of its advantages was the possibility of breaking off so soon as it should show signs of becoming over-costly.

The orthodox view hitherto had been that ships could not fight forts : in 1906 the general staff had decided that any attack upon the Dardanelles was of prohibitive difficulty ; in the autumn of 1914 General Callwell,

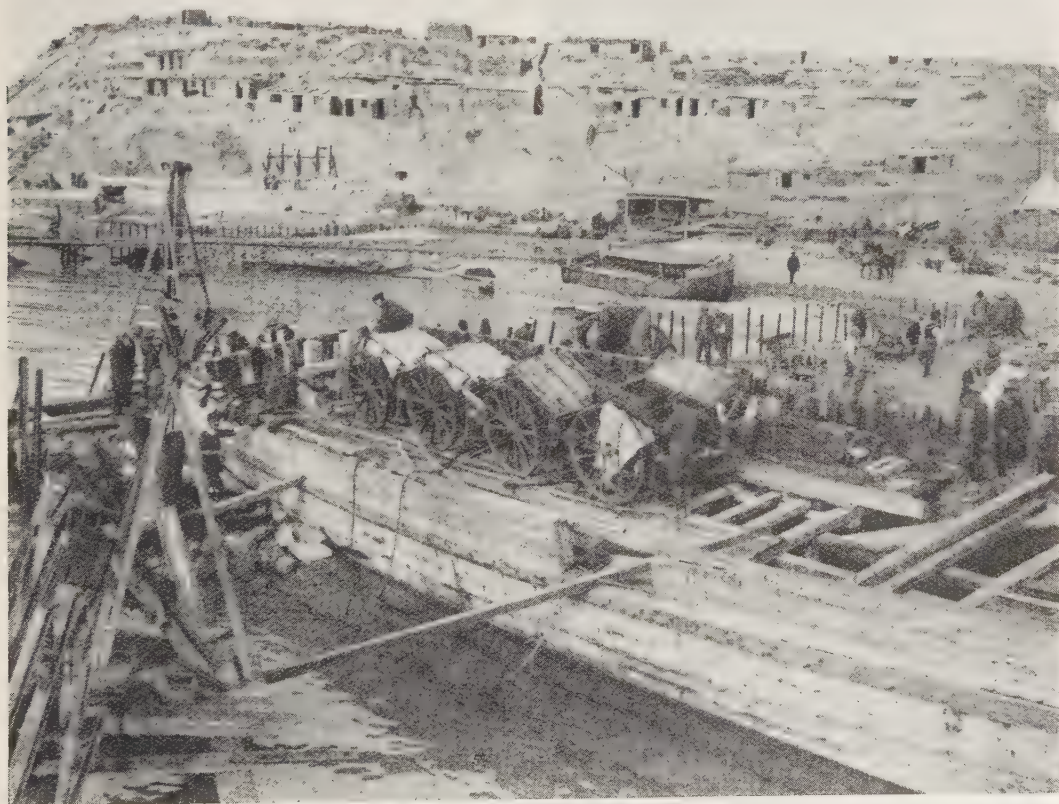
NAVAL ATTACK ON THE DARDANELLES

director of military operations, had advised against a naval or even a combined attempt : it afterwards appeared that all along the best naval opinion had entertained the most serious misgivings. Before January 28th, when the war council finally authorized the attempt, it had become necessary to over-rule Admiral Jellicoe and to over-persuade Lord Fisher : but by this time the French and Russians had been informed of what was toward, Lord Kitchener had been persuaded of the competence of the navy, and was therefore hopeful, and all the political personages were determined that for so great a prize the risk must be taken.

Before the naval attack was begun the idea of military co-operation was already taking form. On February 16th the war council decided to send to Lemnos the 29th Division (composed of regular units) and a force from Egypt, as well as the Royal

Marine battalions already dispatched : on the 19th, in deference to Kitchener (who was himself moved by an urgent appeal from Joffre), the departure of the 29th Division was postponed ; the next day the first sea lord, on hearing from Kitchener that this division was not to go, dispersed the transports collected for it. Meanwhile, on the 19th, the attack by ships was begun.

The outer forts had been bombarded for ten minutes as long ago as November, 1914 ; in January the island of Tenedos had been seized, and Lemnos was also occupied, both islands being still technically Turkish. Within a week of February 19th the entrance to the Straits had been cleared : on March 4th began the attempt upon the Narrows : by the middle of the month the man in the street in Paris as well as London, thought that the work was as good as done ; but though we had indeed frequently "silenced" Turkish



LANCASHIRE LANDING, CAPE HELLES

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

forts we had made no decisive, nor even any very considerable, impression upon their defences.

During this first month of the enterprise the men responsible for its general direction had lacked agreement with each other, and almost each one with himself on different dates. These shiftings of opinion resulted



ADMIRAL DE ROBECK AND GENERAL
SIR IAN HAMILTON

The naval and military commanders in the
Gallipoli campaign.

*From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial
War Museum.*

finally in the intensification of the naval effort, and in the beginning of a military attack, both of which were to end in disaster. By February 24th Kitchener was moving back to the position he had held on the 16th, and went so far as to say that, in the interests of our prestige in the East, there could be no going back, and that if the navy could not do the job the army ought to see it through. At the beginning of March there were fore-shadowings of victory in the movement of opinion in Italy and Bulgaria, in Venizelos's

offer of three Greek divisions, and in Admiral Carden's report on the 2nd that a fine fortnight ought to see him through; but on the 3rd Russia effectively vetoed Greek participation, and from that date also naval action began to flag. On the 5th, indeed, General Birdwood telegraphed to Kitchener his doubts of naval success. This opinion, together with the diminution of his anxiety about the western front, on March 10th induced the war minister, who had explicitly assumed responsibility for any military operations, to order the Royal Naval Division to Lemnos, and to consent to the sending of the 29th Division to those parts, though with what precise objective he did not divulge, and though the necessary transports could not be ready again till the 16th.

Here a short digression is necessary in order to note one important effect which the Dardanelles campaign had already produced.⁵ At the beginning of the war Russia, like France and England, had assured Turkey that her territorial integrity would be respected: from this assurance she held herself absolved when Turkey joined her enemies, and on November 14th she received from Sir Edward Grey a secret promise that the question of Constantinople and the Straits should be settled in conformity with her wishes: now, not contented with this and with her success in rendering Greek intervention impossible, she desired that the promise should be made public. For a decision so important, Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Bonar Law, as well as Mr. Balfour, were summoned to the war council.

From a very early stage of the war it had been clear that the normal cabinet of twenty or more members was not suitable for its conduct, and recourse had been had to committees: of these the chief was the War Council, attended, apparently, almost always by the prime minister, the war secretary and the first lord of the admiralty, by other ministers and by experts in war occasionally as they were required, and very often by Mr. Balfour. It had no constitutional or legal corporate responsibility, but its decisions do not seem ever to have been reversed by the cabinet nor invariably to have waited for its authorization before taking effect. It was the



ANZAC COVE, FROM "HELL SPIT"

Scene of the landing of the Australian and New Zealand troops at Gallipoli.



A CORNER OF THE ANZAC LINES, GALLIPOLI

From Crown Copyright Photographs in the Imperial War Museum.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

ancestor of the later "war cabinet" in two essential respects—it consisted of the most influential personages dealing with the most urgent questions, and it had taken over from the committee of imperial defence its secretariat, headed by Colonel Hankey. This body was now utilized to secure the participation of the official opposition in a momentous decision of policy by inviting the pres-

tion could be effected on terms honourable to both great parties"; but the moment was not considered favourable: the Unionists were cool, and the prime minister, never very fervent, was chilled.

The Greeks had been kept away from the manger, and the Russian dogs destroyed thereby their best chance of ever being in it; but this was not believed at the time. On March 11th Mr. Churchill telegraphed to Admiral Carden that victory would be worth a heavy price, and when next day Kitchener gave Sir Ian Hamilton his marching orders he was still under the impression that the navy alone might reasonably be expected to force the Dardanelles. Sir Ian left on the 13th, with a hastily gathered staff which had no sufficient instructions and no opportunity to study the problems before it.

On the 14th Admiral Carden telegraphed his full concurrence with the instruction of the 11th, and his opinion that "military operations on a large scale should be commenced immediately"; on the 17th Admiral de Robeck (who had succeeded Carden) also expressed agreement, and on the 18th the culminating naval effort was begun.

It was not fortunate⁶: besides other severe damage, the French battleship *Bouvet* and the British battleships *Irresistible* and *Ocean* were sunk by mines and gun-fire. Admiral de Robeck reported that "the plan of attack must be reconsidered, and means found to deal with floating mines": the admiralty prepared to replace his losses and successfully advised the war council to authorize him to continue his operations if he thought fit. On March 19th, however, Sir Ian Hamilton telegraphed that the thing could not be done by ships alone, and on March 23rd the admiral reported that, after consultation with Hamilton and Birdwood, he thought that he had better wait till the middle of April, when he might have their co-operation. Mr. Churchill wished to reply, urging him "to persevere methodically but resolutely," and found some support in the admiralty: he was opposed, however, by the first sea lord, Sir Arthur Wilson, and Sir Henry Jackson, and could neither convert them nor persuade the prime minister (who was of his opinion) to overrule them.



GENERAL BIRDWOOD

In command of the Australian and New Zealand Forces.

From a Photograph by Vandyk, Limited.

ence of the leaders of the Unionist party. They consented to the Russian request, and the required promise was accordingly made public on March 12th.

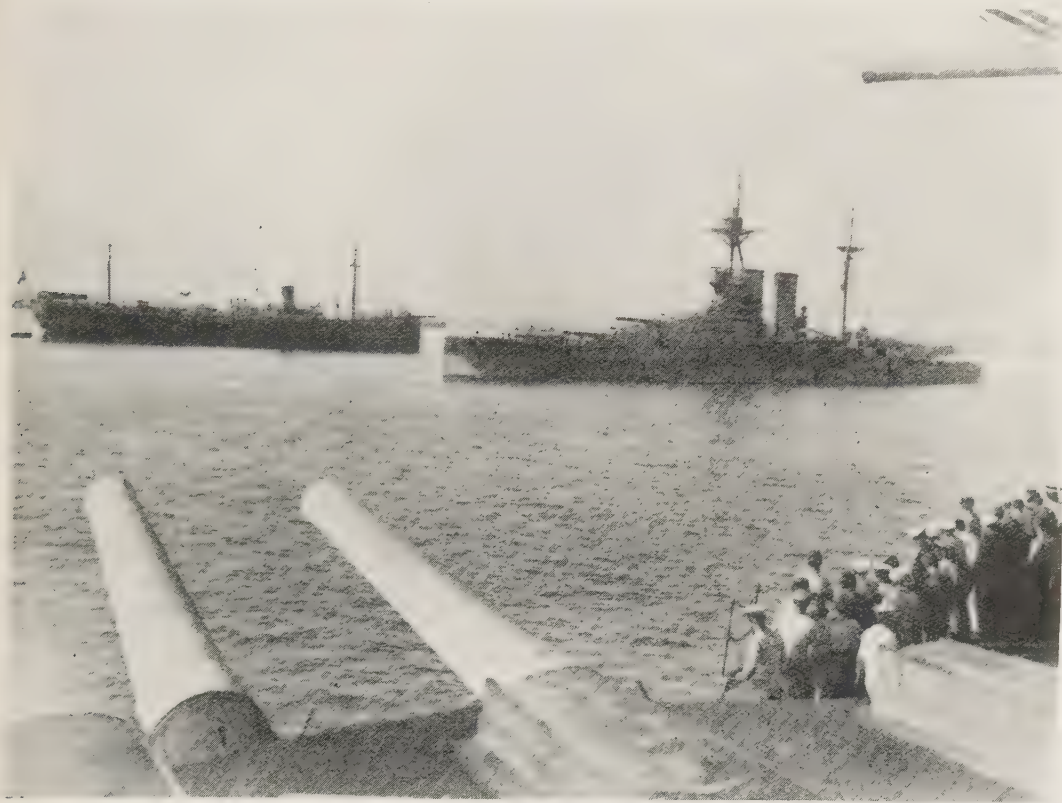
Here was the first step (or the second if the earlier consultation of Mr. Balfour is to be counted) towards a coalition of the two great parties. Such an expedient already had its champions; Mr. Churchill, for instance, "had frequently talked to Mr. Asquith in this sense in the early months of the war, and . . . now pointed out that this moment, when some fruition and promise of success had come to us in the East, was of all others the time when the necessary fusion and coali-

THE LANDING ON GALLIPOLI

There remained the land attack : Sir Ian Hamilton and his generals thought it a desperate hope, and they proved to be right : but it was an attempt which came near to success, and they can in no way be blamed for not having refused to make it.

Delay and indecision had already exacted

highest gallantry, and were maintained in spite of the most trying possible military and sanitary conditions by one of the greatest of all feats of endurance. It is just conceivable that they might have been successfully exploited if here or there the leadership had been different, and rather more likely if



QUEEN ELIZABETH LEAVING MUDROS AFTER HER RECALL FROM THE DARDANELLES

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

more than their customary price : yet more weeks were to be lost because the expeditionary force had to be sent to Alexandria for redistribution on its transports so as to be ready to disembark in face of the enemy ; thus it was not until April 25th that the first landings were made. The possible landing-places were few, and they were defended by an enemy who had had ample time and (from the Germans) the best technical advice for fortifying them ; but the landings were made.

They were made in the face of positions and forces impregnable to all but the very

large reinforcements had been quickly available : but none could be spared, and by the middle of May a third of the force on the spot had succumbed, and it was evident that the military operation could not be successful unless its scale were considerably increased. A few days later three more British warships were sunk, and the *Queen Elizabeth* was withdrawn. On May 15th Fisher resigned his position as first sea lord.

All this is the barest outline of the first half of the Gallipoli adventure : so much detail and no more has been judged relevant,

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because it supplies a capital instance of the way the British people at war was governed and of the spirit in which it took the mistakes and misfortunes of its rulers. To apportion blame is not yet either easy or profitable, nor even possible in a book so small as this with an author so imperfectly informed: it is none the less certain that there is a great

neither of the heads of the two war departments, had given due attention to the case (with which their experts were familiar) against making the attempt: even if it be true that the case for making it was equivalent or preponderant (and most people would agree that the objective was well chosen), still the manner was in itself a condemnation.



THE HUNGRY GUNS

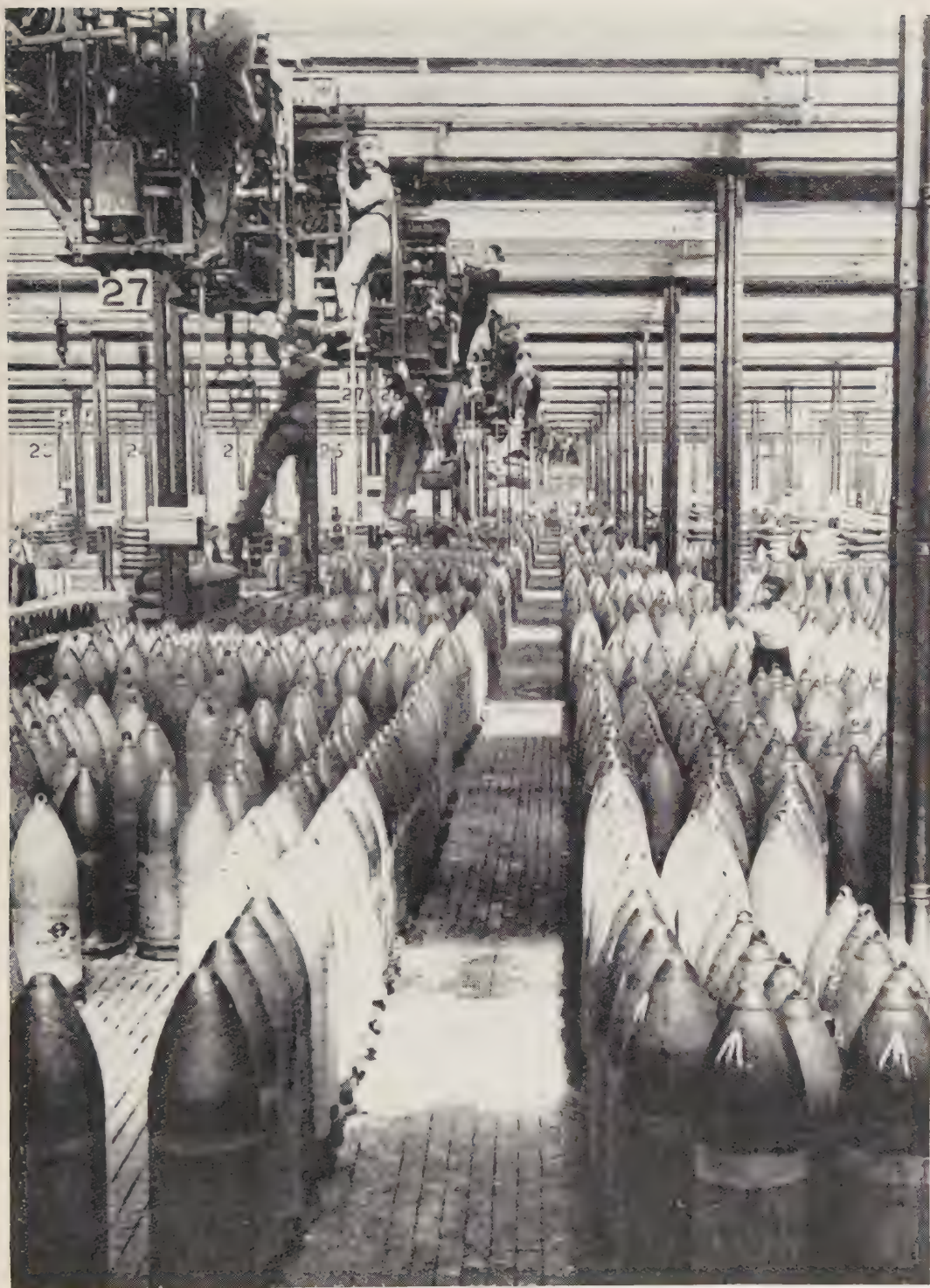
Empty 18-pounder shell cases on the Fricourt road, near Meaulte.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum

deal of blame to apportion, and that of all the men who were, or should have been, responsible for the attempt on the Straits not one, or hardly one, is altogether guiltless. Though such adventures may be glorified by success, for that reason are they all the more unpardonable when they fail. In this case not so much the cabinet system, nor even an adaptation, but rather a disarticulation, of it had proved disastrously incompetent for the direction of strategy. In no real sense had the cabinet, and hardly more the war council, preserved the ultimate control of decisions. Neither of those bodies, and

The very decisions for which most may be claimed were taken often on the wrong bases and sometimes by the wrong persons, and almost always were put into action at the wrong times. The stages in the process were the results less of steps taken than of impulses suffered. The commanders were tried beyond reason. The men died for a gain that did not match their loss.

For there was some gain: the Russians had been helped: the Bulgars had been given pause before committing themselves to our enemies: and some assistance had been given to allied diplomacy which, directed



CRANE GIRLS AT WORK IN A SHELL FACTORY

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

chiefly by Mr. Asquith, had by April 26th secured the promise of Italian intervention.

These were real advantages, but even when on May 23rd Italy declared war they did not fulfil the hopes that had been held out to the British people. It was true that these hopes were not yet absolutely destroyed, yet they had been much deferred and already in some respects irredeemably disappointed. Such postponements and disappointments might have raised an effective public clamour for the removal of all ministers if not for the punishment of some: even when focused by Fisher's resignation and intensified by the munitions grievance, they resulted only in the partial reconstruction of the ministry.

The Shell Shortage

All the armies engaged, perhaps the German army least, had under-estimated the warlike supplies necessary in twentieth-century conditions, and had miscalculated the proportions of the various requirements, especially the proportion of high-explosive shells to shrapnel. On the whole the British army began the war as well equipped, probably, as any, certainly as any but the German. Nevertheless the organization of equipment rapidly became a problem more urgent and more difficult for the British government than for any of its allies or enemies. For this there were three principal reasons, which, in order of their importance, were these. Demands multiplied at a much greater rate from the British army than from any other, because the British army itself expanded much more rapidly: the adaptation of British industry to meet these demands was an affair of singular complexity because of the British government's special weakness, accentuated by the absence of conscription, in relation to manual labour; at the same time it was the clear duty of Britain, as pre-eminently the industrial power of the alliance, to act as a source of supply, in a manner of which France was comparatively, Italy very largely, and Russia altogether, incapable.

From the first it was evident that a vastly increased supply of munitions was wanted, and very soon that with respect to some essential materials we were at a serious disadvantage, which must be removed if our

soldiers were to be given a chance of making gains commensurate with their sacrifices. At first the higher command in France had been somewhat doubtful of its requirements, but it was soon agreed that the most crying needs were for heavy guns and for high explosive shells. In October, 1914, a cabinet committee was appointed to deal with the munition problem; by far its most effective act was the appointment of Lord Moulton at the head of a body of experts to supervise the manufacture of cordite. In the main the war office remained responsible. It does not seem that it did less well than could fairly be expected. The personnel at its disposal was small, the beginning of the process of re-organizing British industry was necessarily the most difficult part, and in comparison with the later ministry of munitions its position relatively to other departments and to the public was extremely weak: nevertheless by February our output of shells was nearly thirteen times, and in March more than nineteen times, what it had been in August and September, and there were great improvements in other respects as well: the war office had been helped by the cabinet committee and by the board of trade, and even so had accomplished very much less than was desirable, but in this matter it had not been slack or unintelligent. Yet demand was still far in advance of supply.

Efforts to Meet the Demand

The method of expansion first tried was the development of the established armament firms by the transfer to them of skilled labour and by allowing them to entrust parts of their work to sub-contractors: this proved unsatisfactory, deliveries not coming up to estimates, and the firms outside the select circle complaining of unfair treatment. It was therefore decided to adopt the policy of giving orders direct to a larger number of contractors; and the execution of this decision, facilitated by a new Defence of the Realm Act, was directed by Mr. Booth's committee, which Kitchener appointed at the end of March, and which was to develop into the ministry of munitions.

Meanwhile the urgency of the need was exasperating the higher command, and was

KITCHENER'S ANXIETY CONCERNING MUNITIONS

beginning to disquiet the public. Sir John French gave to journalists and to important personages interviews and information calculated to stimulate the supply of munitions.⁷ On February 28th Mr. Lloyd George emphasized the greatness of the need: "We are conducting a war as if there were no war. . . . This war is not going to be fought mainly on the battlefields of Belgium and Poland; it is

ployees have risen to the occasion. . . . Notwithstanding these efforts to meet our requirements we have, unfortunately, found that the output is not only unequal to our necessities, but does not fulfil our expectations. . . . I have heard rumours that the workmen in some factories have an idea that the war is going so well that there is no necessity for them to work their hardest. I can



SCENE IN A MUNITION FACTORY
Shell-filling.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

going to be fought in the workshops of France and Great Britain. . . . We stand more in need of equipment than we do of men." He went on to say that, though most of the workmen could be trusted, a minority could throw a whole works out of gear, and, having inquired "What is the reason?" answered: "It is mostly the lure of drink. . . . Drink is doing us more harm than all the German submarines put together." On March 15th, in the House of Lords, Lord Kitchener was no less explicit. "The armament firms have promptly responded to our appeal and have undertaken orders of vast magnitude. The great majority also of the em-

only say that the supply of war material, at the present moment, is causing me very serious anxiety . . . the output of every round of ammunition is of the utmost importance, and has a large influence on our operations in the field."

From that time the agitation grew, at first with especial insistence on Mr. Lloyd George's bogey, drink. We were fighting, he said, Germany, Austria, and drink, and as far as he could see, the greatest of these three deadly foes was drink. This insistence was resented by the munition workers, and did not convince those to whom Germany and Austria (not to speak of envy, greed, and

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

distrust) seemed foes more formidable than beer. The main source of the trouble was more correctly estimated in a memorandum written by Kitchener in January: "The real crux of the situation is, in my opinion, the organization of the skilled labour required to work the machinery . . . shortage could be very much lessened by the employment of unskilled, together with skilled, labour on

impartial tribunal, and on February 24th was itself empowered to act as a court of arbitration for this purpose. It was also in pursuance of this committee's report that on March 4th a conference of trade unions and employers made the "Shells and Fuses Agreement," by which the rules in restraint of dilution were relaxed on condition that skilled men should not be displaced except

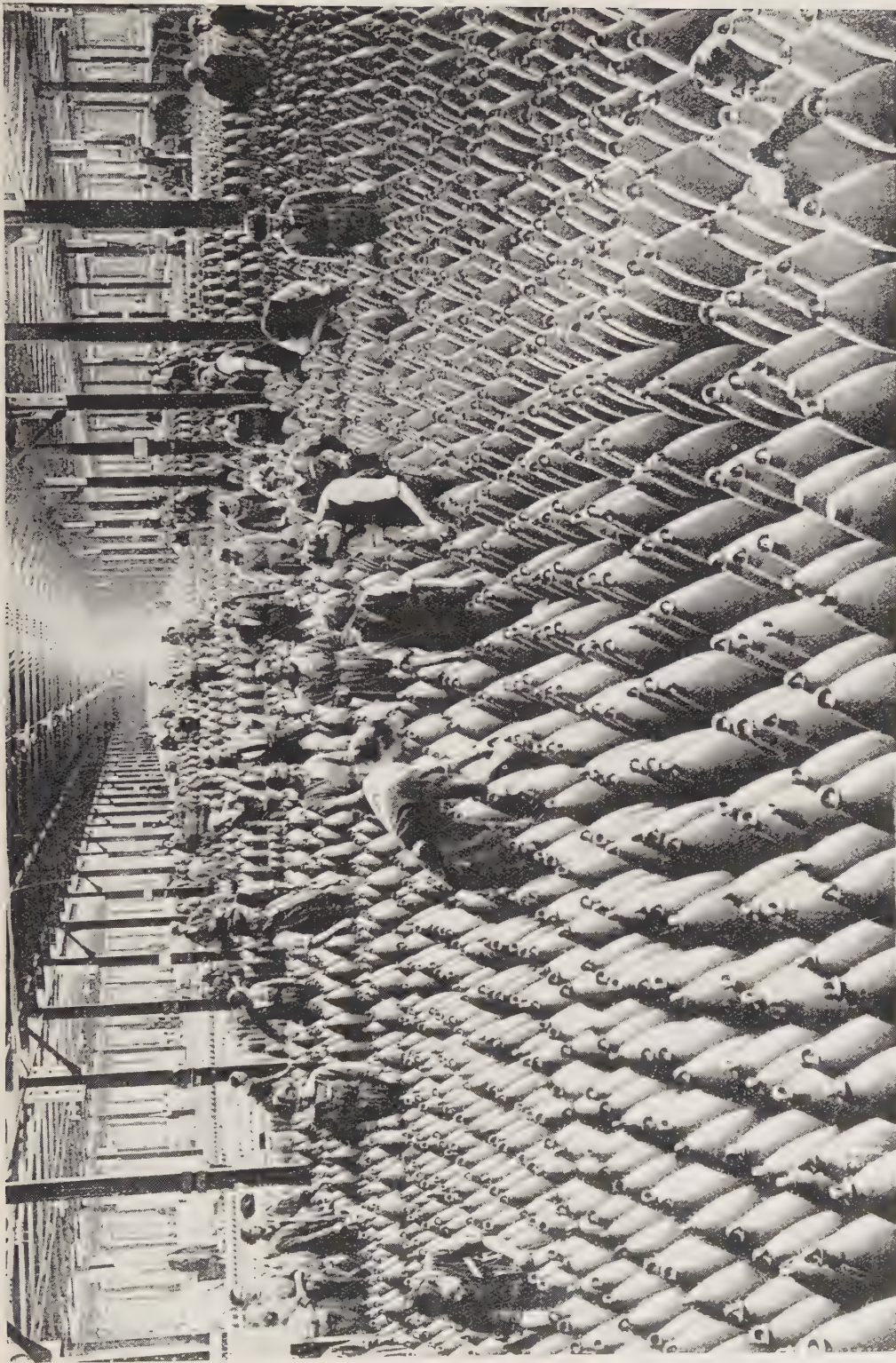


SUPPLIES FOR THE GUNS
A corner of a shell factory.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

the same machines; but trade union rules do not admit of this. One of the first essentials, therefore, is to secure the requisite modifications of these rules." This was a matter, indeed, which had been engaging the attention of the men's unions and of the employers' federation ever since November: but in spite of declarations of good will from both sides and of solicitations from Kitchener and other ministers, they did not reach an effective agreement. Early in February the government appointed the "Committee on Production": this committee called a conference of both sides, which reported in favour of the reference of all disputes to an

to equally skilled employment, that inferior labour should be paid at the usual rates for the same work, that the removal of restrictions should not be continued beyond the emergency or otherwise turned to the prejudice of the workers, that government work should be evenly distributed, that overtime should be kept down to the minimum, and that the inferior labour should be the first discharged.⁸ This agreement was accepted by a ballot of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. By March 19th the government, fortified by the Defence of the Realm (Consolidation) Act of March 9th, which empowered it to seize factories and



"SHELLS AND MORE SHELLS"

Scene in a war-time munition factory.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

issue orders to the employees, obtained the signature of most of the unions to the "Treasury Agreement," which authorized dilution in the above sense and promised that disputes should be submitted to arbitration. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers stood out for stiffer guarantees than the other unions, and especially received an undertaking that profits resulting from the relaxation of trade restrictions should accrue to the State. To supervise the enforcement of this agreement joint local committees were set up, and did some good work, but dwindled into insignificance after the institution of the ministry of munitions.

Ministers and the Shell Shortage

All these measures were producing results, but in the nature of the case the results were not immediate. Some blame could plausibly be cast on the unions for magnifying what directly interested them, at a dreadful price to their country: and some on the employers for not doing more to remove the suspicions of the men: but far the most fell on the government. It was not a heavy charge that, like every other government, it had under-estimated the supplies necessary to an army corps; that it had led, or followed, the country into a great war with only six divisions ready to fight for it, was a charge which a great many people had reasons for not bringing, and to which some answer could be made: that, having been convinced of the necessity of creating a great army, it did not at once set itself systematically and energetically to provide it with every tool it could need—this was the charge which proved fatal. It came on top of the disquiet about the Dardanelles, it was reiterated in the *Daily Mail* and in the *Times* by the henchmen of Lord Northcliffe, who had always judged the cabinet feeble and half-hearted; and then when Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George took up their defence they made the politician's mistake of proving too much.

It was on April 20th, at Newcastle, that Mr. Asquith made the speech destined to evoke the final impulse which drove the enfeebled Liberal government from office. The speech was intended to stimulate the manufacture of munitions; and the speaker

turned aside to show that the lack was not nearly so grievous as had been represented; it had been said that "the operations not only of our own army but of our allies were being crippled or at any rate hampered by our failure to provide the necessary munitions . . . there is not a word of truth in that statement, which is the more treacherous because if it were believed it is calculated to dishearten our troops, to discourage our allies, and to stimulate the hopes and activities of our enemies."

These sentences were certainly defensible: there was the admirable motive of avoiding encouragement to the enemy, and if there was also the motive of self-defence, that was at least respectable: as to the matters of fact involved, the prime minister had a good case, having six days before received from Kitchener a report that Sir John French considered "that with the present supply of ammunition he will have as much as his troops will be able to use on the next forward movement": and the very day after the Newcastle speech Mr. Lloyd George said almost exactly the same thing as Mr. Asquith, with a greater wealth of detail and explanation. Nevertheless, as the newspapers said at the time, "ministers may say what they please"; as may now be said, Kitchener and French may have said what they pleased, our army in France certainly was hampered by lack of ammunition, and the army in France knew it, and the people in England suspected it. These suspicions were kept alive by the Northcliffe press, and they became deadly when, after Festubert, Sir John French resolved to do all he could to help the critics and possible rivals of the cabinet.

Coming of the Coalition

As has been shown, the idea of coalition was not new; it had been realized in France; in England it had been suggested from the first, but the government, in the enjoyment of the loyal support of the opposition, did not consider it, and since then party feeling had been revived over the enacting of the Home Rule Bill, and attempts at more intimate co-operation had not always been very encouraging; nevertheless there were important forces making for that solution.

FORMATION OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT

Of all the politicians the two who had been most active in the conduct of the war were Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill : both were inclined to coalition. It would tend to diminish what they regarded as the excessive centralization of control in Lord Kitchener's hands : perhaps also they anticipated without regret that it would lessen the authority of the prime minister ; and it would distribute the responsibility for the rapidly increasing demands on the country for men, money, and munitions. It would have been better done when things were going well : but now it had to be done, if anything of the cabinet's political situation was to be saved.

On May 14th in the House of Commons Mr. Asquith stated, in reply to Mr. Handel Booth, that while "the government were greatly indebted to the leading members of all parties for suggestions and assistance on certain specific subjects," their admission to the ministry "was not in contemplation, and he was not aware that it would meet with general assent." On the same day the *Times* published the report from its military correspondent, then at general headquarters, that "the want of an unlimited supply of high explosive shells was a fatal bar to our

success." On the 15th Lord Fisher resigned, and by that date Sir John French's emissary had put his case before Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law, and Mr. Balfour. At the same time the cabinet was embarrassed by the renewed doubt whether, after all, Italy's accession could be counted on. Mr. Asquith appears at first to have thought that he could go on : but on the 17th he was threatened with a demand for a committee of inquiry from Mr. Bonar Law, and with Mr. Lloyd George's resignation unless a national government were formed, and that day he wrote to Mr. Bonar Law, "after long and careful consideration, I have definitely come to the conclusion that the conduct of the war to a successful and decisive issue cannot be effectively carried on except by a cabinet which represents all parties in the State." The next day, before this decision had been made public, a number of Liberal members met to denounce a coalition as the object of a mere Tory plot, but they were converted by Mr. Asquith's assurance that "certain things had happened, certain things had been divulged, certain things had emerged as probable, which have made it necessary to reconstruct the government" : and on June 7th the new coalition government met parliament.⁹



HEAVY GUNS MOVING ALONG THE FRICOURT-ALBERT ROAD

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POSTER APPEAL FOR VOLUNTARY ENLISTMENT

CHAPTER V

COMPULSION

THE efficient and economical conduct of a great war under the forms of a parliamentary democracy is a problem not yet completely solved. It may be argued that in modern conditions difficulties no less great confront other forms of government at war. At least the event of the European war gave success to the more parliamentary and democratic side: yet no section of British opinion would deny that grave inconveniences were inherent in the forms and methods of British government or maintain that at any period of the war they were altogether overcome. The first attempt had been by means of the continuance of the peace-time method of a party administration, fortified by opposition support of war measures and by the suspension of domestic controversy. On neither of these reinforcements was it possible to rely quite absolutely: as to the second, it has

already been seen that Ireland had not lost its old character as a source of acrimony. There was some default of both when Lord Robert Cecil, as spokesman of the Conservative party, secured an amendment of the Defence of the Realm Regulations to reduce the possibility of "the powers of the censor being used for political purposes or for the purpose of undue concealment of misfortune or anything else of the kind, merely because they were likely to prove embarrassing or disagreeable or hurtful to the reputation of any particular minister."

This was a useful result of the independence of the opposition, but it was clear that the principle of independence might be fatal to the whole system of a tolerated partisan administration, if ever that administration were exposed to an attack which it could neither compromise nor repel. This was the contingency which immediately preceded

WHO'S ABSENT?



Is it you?



EVERYONE
SHOULD DO HIS BIT

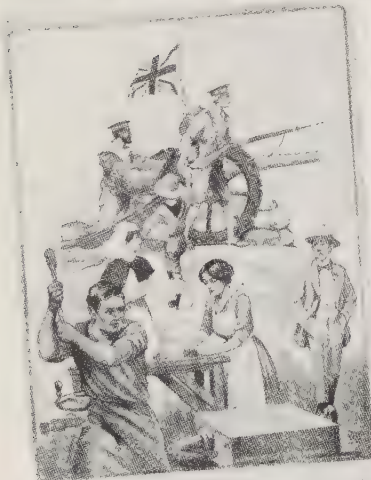


ENLIST NOW

STEP INTO YOUR PLACE



COME LAD
SLIP ACROSS AND HELP



Are YOU in this?

THERE'S ROOM
FOR YOU



ENLIST
TO-DAY

WOMEN OF BRITAIN
SAY-

GO!



FURTHER EXAMPLES OF THE POSTER APPEALS FOR RECRUITS

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

the formation of the first coalition : it need not be doubted that there was a causal as well as a temporal connexion, in spite of the "long and careful consideration" which had convinced Mr. Asquith of the necessity of "a cabinet which represents all parties in the State." He may not have shared Mr. Churchill's opinion that it was still possible without personal changes to secure the support of great majorities in both houses of parliament, and he had a very good right to believe (as at that time and for long after many others believed) that his own continuance at the head of affairs was essential to the preservation of national unity, to which purpose the conciliation of his parliamentary opponents was thus both directly and indirectly necessary.

Personnel of the First Coalition

The most important changes were these : Lord Haldane left the cabinet and Mr. Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George, while remaining in it, were transferred, the one from the admiralty to the chancellery of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the other from the exchequer, where he was succeeded by Mr. McKenna, to the newly-created ministry of munitions : the accessions to the cabinet were Mr. Henderson, representing the Labour party, and, of the Unionists, Lord Lansdowne and Lord Curzon, and Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Mr. Walter Long, and Sir Edward Carson. The Irish party had been offered representation, but had declined.

As a result of these changes the cabinet contained twenty-one members, of whom twelve were Liberal, seven Unionist, one Labour, and one of no party. It has been denied (and it has never been asserted) that the Unionists made any conditions as to policy or anything else but persons. It would be unfair to make this matter of reproach : the business of a political party is to obtain office, and in that business the Unionists had been strenuously and unrewardedly engaged for nine years : no doubt this preoccupation had lingered excessively, among the lesser men at least. But it is difficult to see what guarantees as to policy could usefully have been demanded, and on

the other hand it might reasonably be supposed that the possession of a third of the seats in the cabinet would give the Unionists an effective share in the realization of that policy of organizing every resource for the attainment of complete victory on which almost all parties were now agreed. The great outstanding question of principle was the extent to which compulsion should be applied : this question was to be settled in the course of the next year.

The general political effect of the coalition was enormously to weaken parliament's will and power to criticize, and practically to deprive it of its function of changing, the government. The House of Commons no longer contained a set of men capable of replacing the members in office : any change would be made not by the forces in the house, but by those in the cabinet itself : the government would still require a majority in the house, but it began with one that was overwhelming ; it had harnessed to its chariot the two great parties and a section of a third, and it had no dissolution to fear. In these circumstances the comparative importance of the Press really was considerably, and could plausibly claim to be enormously, increased.

The "Dardanelles Committee"

The mutual relations of the new government and the Dardanelles adventure were evidently destined to have very great (perhaps in the event they had decisive) effects upon both. That this was perceived from the first is shown by the name of The "Dardanelles Committee" which was given to the new war council, consisting of Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Lord Crewe, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Balfour, Lord Curzon, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Selborne, and Lord Kitchener.

If in the middle of May the Dardanelles expedition had been recalled, there would certainly have been a great saving in men and money : if in the early summer it had been reasonably reinforced (three divisions were what, on May 17th, Sir Ian Hamilton wanted), it might possibly have reached its objective, and have much reduced, perhaps even halved, the duration of the war. The decision in favour of the second course, of raising the

FATAL DELAY OF THE DARDANELLES COMMITTEE



THE RT. HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL

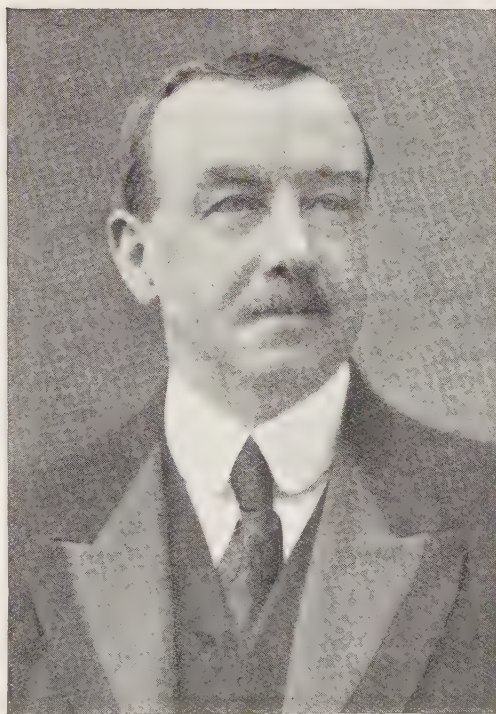
From a Photograph by Russell, London.

stakes and going for the great prize, was as good as made at the time when the change of government was undertaken. Nearly three months intervened before it began to affect the forces on the peninsula: the interval destroyed all chance of success.

The new government quickly came round to its predecessor's view, but, owing to political preoccupations, it was not till June 7th that the Dardanelles Committee, at its first meeting, made up its mind to send Sir Ian Hamilton four more divisions, and even then it had some difficulty in securing, on the 9th, the cabinet's authorization: so conditions in England had wastefully expended twenty-three days without any strategical warrant. Indirectly the waste was still greater, for the necessity to wait for a moonless night before attempting a surprise landing, meant the postponement till August 7th of what might have been done a month sooner.¹ Time was given to the Turks still further to strengthen their positions, and to keep their numbers level with those of their enemies. The delay—by itself enough to destroy the chance of success—combined with some incompetence in the tactical leadership to rob the British and

Australasian troops of the distinction of victory, leaving to their high courage and immense endurance the bitter consolation of a glory frustrated less by their enemies than by their governors. The expedition lingered ineffectual till it was abandoned in despair. And there for the present the strategic situation may be left.

The first ten months of war had brought the British people demands greater than it had ever been led to expect, and left it evidently farther from victory than at the very beginning it had imagined itself, and (as time was to show) in fact much farther than it even now supposed. The economists' estimates of three months or six months had long been abandoned; Lord Kitchener's three years, which had seemed fantastically long, were beginning to appear mercifully short, and soldiers were consoling each other, in irony almost free from bitterness, with the assurance that the first five years were sure to be the worst. It is remarkable that a



THE RT. HON. ARTHUR HENDERSON

Labour representative in the first Coalition Cabinet.

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



TROOPS GOING ASHORE AT THE DARDANELLES

H.M.S. *Implacable* is in the background.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

people accustomed to cast upon its government the blame of every economic and social misfortune, resented so little the failure of its rulers. Those rulers, in view of all the circumstances that entangled and befogged them, may gain the verdict of posterity; but they were ill-placed to challenge the admiration or even to solicit the tolerance of their own generation. Yet the marmurs were singularly free from rancour. Probably Mr. Asquith was right if he judged the public unwilling that his position should continue quite unchanged, or that Mr. Churchill should remain at the admiralty; but when the Northcliffe press, which had had something (if less than it boasted) to do with the change of government, tried to continue the campaign as a war to the knife, against Lord Kitchener especially, the immediate result was loss of popularity for the papers concerned.

Besides the advantages of a patient public, the new ministry had considerable assets in the mistakes of its predecessor, and in those things which its predecessor had done well, but whose benefits had not yet matured.

Assets of both these latter kinds were to its hand in the problem of munition supply, the first in point of urgency. Contracts made by the war office began to produce material after the control of supply had been transferred to other hands. Much more important was the work of the Armaments Output Committee, which Lord Kitchener had appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. G. M. Booth. The late regime had been inadequate, and was believed to have been even more inadequate than it was; the best of the seed it had sown had not yet fructified, but its harvest was to be invaluable. What was more, the great new spending department had at its head the strongest figure in the government, who had given up the exchequer for the purpose. The ministry of munitions could not have begun under more favourable auspices.

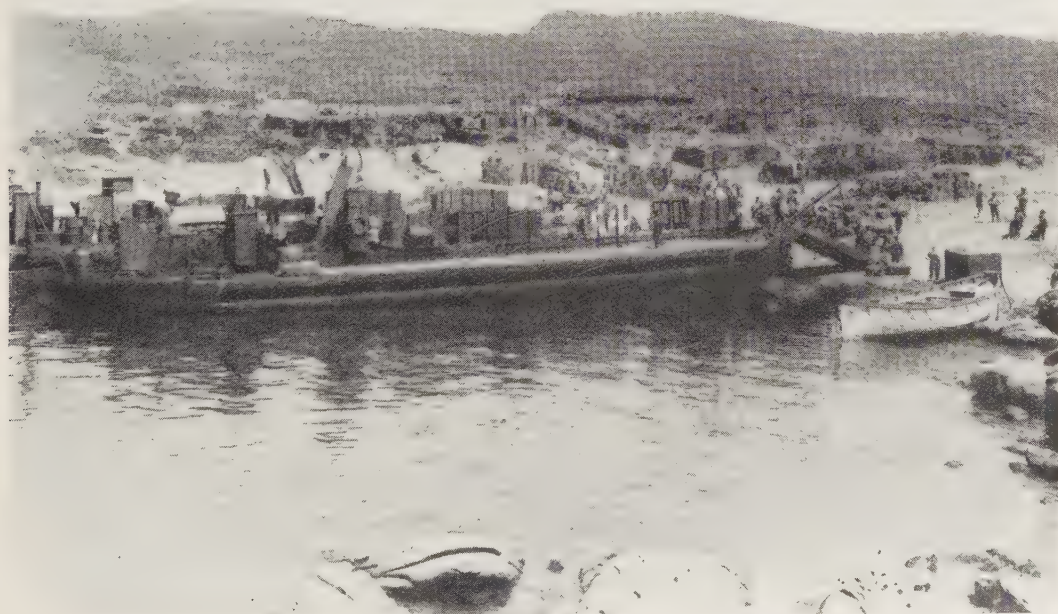
The appointment of the "Treasury Committee" under the presidency of Mr. Lloyd George had greatly increased the authority of Mr. Booth's committee, which was thenceforth enabled to deal directly and effectively through the chancellor of the exchequer

PASSING OF THE MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS ACT

both with the cabinet and with the war office, the admiralty, and the board of trade. The policy of not being content with the expansion of the old armament firms, but of supplementing them by grouping some of the other firms into co-operative units, by employing others as sub-contractors, and by setting up national factories, was already being applied. Besides this, the labour exchanges were being used to obtain a comprehensive survey of engineering resources, the Defence of the Realm legislation empowered the government to take over or control factories, and labour difficulties were dealt with by the treasury agreement along lines which in the main remained fixed. All these devices were continued in use by the ministry of munitions. A beginning had also been made with the co-ordination of recruiting for the front and recruiting for the

factories. When, on May 26th, the prime minister announced that a new department, responsible for munition supply, was to be created, and Mr. Lloyd George began his work at its head, there were already, under the joint direction of Mr. Booth and Sir Percy Girouard, a central department and a considered policy.

The Ministry of Munitions Act was passed on June 9th. It and the Munitions of War Act conferred very wide powers, most of which were exercised under a system, or agglomeration, of indirect legislation promulgated by the ministry itself or by other departments. It had rights over factories, machinery, materials, and land. It could even acquire in perpetuity from unwilling owners; it could ignore local bye-laws and home office rules: it restricted the supply of labour, machinery, and material to industries



THE LANDING-PLACE, SUVLA, WITH MOTOR LAUNCHES

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HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

not essential to the war: it controlled the profits of employers and the wages of labourers: it provided compulsory arbitration for labour disputes, and set up extraordinary tribunals to punish munitions offences. Experience showed the disadvantages of indirect legislation, which was always under suspicion of exceeding its authority, and was sometimes convicted of such excess in the ordinary courts; but probably it was indispensable in the ruling circumstances of urgency and makeshift. Fears had been expressed that the minister was being given a dictatorship extending even to the exaction of compulsory labour, but the bill was amended in committee to exclude this interpretation.

Working of the Munitions Act

This legislation was hurried and muddled, it required a good deal of amendment, and it caused, both by its provisions and by its omissions, some friction and ill-will which might have been avoided, but it did produce, or at least under it there were produced, the supplies that made victory possible, and it was sincerely intended to conciliate with the needs of a state at war the just rights and legitimate expectations of the wage-earning population.² When the Munitions of War Act, 1915, was being drafted and enacted, the spokesmen of labour were consulted at every stage. By far the most controversial of the difficulties to be met were connected with the conditions of employment, the distribution and remuneration of work. Restrictive customs were dealt with as in the treasury agreement, but now, in "controlled establishments" the board of trade was made judge of what was restrictive. It is well to remember that employers, though in practice they were much less affected, were forbidden restrictive practices equally with employees, so that, for instance, an employer's unwillingness to admit to his shop members of a particular trade union was held illegal. Almost all factories providing even indirectly for war needs were very soon declared to be under control.

One of the provisions most keenly resented as a grievance was the institution of the "leaving certificate," which had to be

produced by any workman who had left munitions employment and who was seeking another engagement. It is doubtful whether this device was of much value in confining labour to essential industries, and certain that it largely contributed to the maintenance and extension of industrial unrest. Workmen complained that employers made it impossible for them to go to other situations where they might earn more and be more useful, and used the certificate rule to threaten them with six weeks' loss of pay if they were not in every way amenable. Various attempts were made to strengthen the powers of the tribunals in this regard, and the workers' confidence in them, but with incomplete success, so that in October, 1917, leaving certificates were abolished.

Another serious grievance inherent in the methods by which the ministry controlled industry was the lack of adaptation of remuneration to service. One of the conditions exacted by the unions in return for their tolerance of dilution was that the resultant profits should not enrich the employers. This condition was fulfilled by the requirement that controlled establishments should surrender to the exchequer four-fifths of their net gains over and above an average taken from their last two years' accounts. This limitation and the later excess profits duty were perhaps the most effective devices available, but they did not suffice to preclude complaints, always exaggerated but seldom quite unfounded, against profiteering in munition as in other industries.

Payment of Unskilled Labour

Far more unsettling was the glaring injustice with which monetary rewards were distributed among the workmen themselves. For this their own leaders were largely responsible. When they had consented to dilution they had covenanted that unskilled or semi-skilled labour doing work habitually allotted to the skilled should receive the same rates of pay. The consequence was that inexperienced workers employed on skilled work were often able to earn more than the fully skilled men who were performing more difficult operations, and even than those by whom they themselves were being super-

THE QUESTION OF COMPULSORY ARBITRATION

vised. Here was a grievance of the most irritating kind : it was never completely met, and has had results of which by no means all are yet in the past.

The most immediately important of all the provisions of the munitions legislation were those designed to avert or at least to minimize what might have been the fatal danger of industrial disputes. Strikes and

been especially resolute in their dislike to compulsory arbitration, and appear to have believed that they were in fact exempted from it by the provision that where means for settlement already existed they might be utilized, and by its restriction to munitions work ; this last, however, was illusory, for the government was empowered to extend compulsion to any industry where it



A POSTER APPEAL FOR MEN AND MUNITIONS

lock-outs in munition factories were forbidden until after the matters in dispute had been referred to the board of trade and that office had let three weeks pass without taking steps towards settlement. Such steps might include compulsory arbitration, whether by a single person agreed on by the parties or named by the board, or by a court composed in equal numbers of representatives of employers and workmen, with a chairman appointed by the board. For not complying with the award a workman might be fined £5 a day, or an employer at the same rate for each employee in respect of whom he refused compliance.

The miners and the cotton operatives had

considered disputes likely to prejudice munitions supply, and in the event this power was very soon tested. On July 13th a proclamation was issued making it an offence for the South Wales miners to take part in a strike, just as if they had been directly engaged on the production of munitions : in defiance of the threatened penalties they struck the next day. Within a week they returned to work, but it was not the terrors of the act which drove them back. On the contrary, they gained most of their demands, and the government, although it had relied on the promise of the Miners' Federation that there should be no strikes during the war, agreed that no action should be taken under the act.

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Evidently, then, the attempt to avoid industrial stoppages by enforcing arbitration had failed. Nevertheless the arbitration clauses had their usefulness: more useful still was the steadfastness of public feeling in support of the prosecution of the war, the fact, for instance, that in this very case of the South Wales miners the general opinion was hostile to the strikers. For these or other causes no serious disputes (apart from the one just discussed and another in South Wales) took place in the second half of 1915, although in the first half there had been an alarming recrudescence of strikes; later on the country's war effort was somewhat impeded and much more threatened by disputes between employers and employed, but the record in this respect of 1916 was better than that of 1915, and though 1917 and 1918 were not quite so good they were better than any year before the war.

Business Men as Public Administrators

Another branch of munitions policy which deserves some attention is the introduction into public administration of men with records of success in competitive industry: like so many other of the methods remembered as characteristic of Mr. Lloyd George and his ministry, this one did not owe its existence to them. Indeed, in this case the contrary was more nearly true, and some indication has already been given of how much the ministry and its policy owed to the committee appointed by Lord Kitchener, especially to Mr. G. M. Booth. But it was partly because of Mr. Lloyd George's personal bias, more because the agitation which produced the ministry was largely a reaction against bureaucratic methods, that the new office was from the first so largely controlled by business men, so little by civil servants. The departure from administrative practice, and the unusual status of the business men were emphasized by the arrangement giving a dozen heads of departments direct access to the minister, and by the division of the office into four semi-independent organizations, whose heads were given a very wide discretion in the organization of their work and in the matter of intercommunication. This resulted in a good deal of overlapping

and lack of co-ordination, to remedy which successive ministers (especially Mr. Montagu and Mr. Churchill) found it advisable to introduce an increasing degree of centralization and of civil-service method, facilitated by the transfer to the ministry of regular civil servants. One of the chief charges against the business men was that they imported into public administration their natural inclination to competition and expansion, so that the size of the various departments swelled unreasonably. This charge was not without foundation, and it was the business men, also, who were responsible for the absence of a proper accounting system: the bureaucratic infusion did not remove these evils, but did limit them.

The re-organization of munition supply had at least the merit of success: the business men may have been given too free a hand, the enforcement of arbitration may have had very little effect for good, the drift to inanition of the local joint committees may have destroyed a real chance of considerably improving the relations of capital and labour, there was doubtless a good deal of muddled administration and of unremunerative expenditure: but our armies and fleets, and the armies and fleets of our allies, obtained the equipment which made victory possible. Of what was necessary to produce this effect there is some indication in the following ratios of munition production: June, 1915, 100; December, 1915, 200; June, 1916, 920; December, 1916, 1,540; June, 1917, 2,800.

Assuring Supplies of Munitions

By the spring of 1915 the British government and people were convinced that it was their duty to organize and concentrate upon the pursuit of victory every resource of which they could honourably dispose. The putting of that conviction into effect was the reason for the existence of the new government, and with that end in view it passed the munitions legislation which was the largest single step towards securing an adequate supply of military engines.

Even while that step was being taken, the problem of securing an adequate supply of men, both for factories and for the army, was acquiring an inexorable urgency. Some

WAR-SERVICE BADGES

indication has already been given of how the munition acts had attempted to solve the first half of this problem : it is necessary now to show the relations between the two halves, and the way in which the second also was tackled. There is one obvious distinction between the two solutions : in the one case

certainty that uncontrolled enlistment would accept for the fighting forces many of the men who were most valuable in the factories. The first attempt to minimize this evil was initiated at the very end of 1914, when the admiralty began to issue war-service badges to the royal dockyards and to certain con-



WHEN THE OUTPUT OF SHELLS MET THE DEMAND

The finishing touches.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

the degree of compulsion and the method of its application were decided at one time and were maintained with comparatively slight modifications ; in the other compulsion was utilized by a slow, piecemeal process.

At the beginning of the war it was determined to continue the reliance on voluntary recruiting, and for the first nine months or so this decision was so far justified on the main point that it was not very seriously challenged, though it had many inconveniences and disadvantages : among these was the

tractors : this they did with very little attempt at discrimination, in which respect their example was somewhat bettered by the war office when, in March, 1915, it too began to issue badges. These badges were distributed by the employers, who were naturally in a position of peculiar difficulty for the observance of impartiality and proportion, and they afforded only very partial protection against recruiting agencies.³

When the ministry of munitions was set up, one of the duties entrusted to it was

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the supervision of badging: it had the statutory right to issue badges, and it was an indictable offence for anyone else to do so; its endeavours to use its powers in this respect justly and efficaciously were made through a varying series of boards and committees, to which an end was put only by the institution of the National Service Ministry.

Coming of Conscription

Very shortly after the beginning of the attempt to protect industry against the recruiting sergeant the recruiting sergeant's own need of reinforcement was attracting attention: even before the agitation for speeding up equipment had taken effect the necessity for alterations in the methods of enlistment was being pressed, and as soon as there were grounds for hoping that the supply of military stores might overtake the enrolling of soldiers, voices considerable in number and influence commenced to urge, or continued with increasing vehemence to urge, the advisability of conscription. It was another year before these voices could claim complete success, but from the first they had strong arguments and powerful allies. Of their allies the most valuable were a section of the public and a section of the cabinet. Those who were proud that their husbands and lovers, their friends and relatives, had interrupted their careers, sacrificed their comforts, and given or risked their lives, might pardonably desire that other men, for whatever reason less eager in their country's cause, should at need be compelled to serve wherever their service was judged most likely to make victory certain and swift.

The mixed composition of the new cabinet made it more likely that this view would prevail. The Liberal party was traditionally the party of small armies and voluntary enlistment, and though almost all of its leaders were persuaded that the time for small armies had passed yet they were determined to go on as long as possible with voluntary enlistment and many of their followers (notably in the press) were more slowly converted to armies on a continental scale, and more inclined to oppose conscription, not as a premature or unnecessary

device, but as a wicked principle. The Unionist party and its representatives in the cabinet had no such scruples to overcome: some Unionists had even in peace-time desired that military service should be compulsory, and none doubted that the State might justly compel such service whenever it was quite sure of the necessity. There is no reason to believe, as was sometimes asserted, that the Unionists in the cabinet wanted conscription for its own sake, or that from the first they endeavoured to hasten its approach, but their presence did reinforce the government's conviction of the moral lawfulness of conscription and diminish its reluctance to be persuaded of its practical advantages.

Exemption of Munition Workers

Besides the paramount and inexorable necessity of finding men to fight, and before this necessity became immediate and undeniable, there were other arguments also in favour of applying some measure of compulsion to recruiting. The voluntary method was already, illogically enough, provided with a kind of exemptive arrangement in the interests of the munition industry. Nor were skilled mechanics the only choice souls who of their own accord turned themselves into cannon-fodder: it is a little too easy to laugh at the simple enthusiasm which thinks that in war-time the State has no need of scholars: it is good that scholars and fiddlers and poets and politicians like other men should suffer discomfort and run risks for the safety of the State, but in the period of voluntary enlistment it continually became more distressingly evident that a disproportionate number of persons of special value was being subjected to a disproportionate experience of the dangers and hardships of war. With a wastefulness even greater than was inevitable, those from whose lives most might have been hoped were being allowed to spill them in swift prodigality for the ransom of their country. It might be held also that to leave each man to decide his own duty in this matter was in a strain of moral elevation too high for common humanity; how was an individual very vaguely informed of the needs of the

COMPULSORY REGISTRATION

State and necessarily a poor judge alike of his own actual value in his civilian employment and of his own potentialities as a soldier, how was a man in this situation to determine what he ought to do ?

The reality of this difficulty was admitted by any scheme of badging, and in practice it was notorious that the best citizens gave the benefit of the doubt to the army, and the worst to industry, while a great mass in between was sorely troubled by conscience, and by counsel. The tone of much of this last was a strong argument against voluntarism. What came from private sources was almost always either misguided or superfluous, was often ill-mannered, and sometimes malicious. Public advice and persuasion steadily deteriorated ; the appeal, for instance, to "King and Country" soon disappeared in a flood of cheap substitutes, a faked and most offensive jollity, a false contempt for the cowardly or incompetent Germans, insincere sentiment about a variety of undefined abstractions, moral blackmail of the "What did you do in the Great War ?" type. Such things seemed to some a derogation from liberty and decency more regrettable than an equitable compulsion would have been.

Policy of National Registration

Nevertheless the voluntary tradition was so strong, the opposition to conscription of doctrinaire Liberals and trade-union officials so highly rated, that almost a year elapsed between the Munitions Acts and the Military Service Act : but all that time the government was continually brought, partly by clamour, but much more by a succession of necessities, nearer and nearer to the principle of conscription, so that the statute itself was merely a final step and not a leap in the dark.

Conscription might be in no circumstances justifiable or it might be a legitimate device which was not yet opportune ; in either case an inventory of the country's human resources would be useful and inoffensive, and if in the end conscription should come it would be invaluable. It is clear that the change of government occasioned the taking of this first step, the attempt to compile an

exhaustive estimate of the human resources available for war purposes. On April 20, 1915, Mr. Lloyd George stated that the government was not of opinion that there was any ground for thinking that the war would be more successfully prosecuted by means of conscription ; on May 18th Lord Haldane thought that though in peace departure from the voluntary system was most difficult, yet now we might find that we had to reconsider the situation ; the next day private members of the House of Commons (not all of them Unionists) were urging conscription or at least registration, and the under-secretary for war, though he spoke of the reluctance to be overcome before adopting a policy of coercion, would not deny the possibility that in time such a policy might be desirable. On June 5th Mr. Churchill told his constituents that if compulsion were necessary for achieving victory he would support it, though he did not believe that it would be, and was sure that it was not yet, necessary : in any case he was in favour of a more complete organization of the nation.

"Single" and "Married" Controversy

On June 8th Mr. Asquith announced that the government was carefully considering the question of compulsory registration, and a week later promised an early statement of its decision. The under-secretary for war on June 21st accepted the suggestion of Mr. J. Mason (Unionist) that a national inventory of our personnel might keep open the door of voluntarism, while at the same time correcting the proportion of single to married soldiers, and putting skilled workmen where they were most useful ; though Mr. Tyson Wilson (Labour) argued that registration would involve compulsion since, "if single men are separated from married men, and they decline to enlist, of what good will the registration be without some form of compulsion ?" A few days later Mr. Asquith spoke of the government's "one plain, paramount duty . . . to bring to the service of the State the willing and organized help of every class in the kingdom."

These few quotations may sufficiently indicate how the sentiment which produced the coalition proceeded, in pursuance of its

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object of exploiting for victory all British resources, from its first achievement (the munitions legislation) to its second—the National Registration Bill, introduced on June 29th by Mr. Walter Long, president of the local government board. The essence of this measure was the provision that every inhabitant of Great Britain between the

well the general feeling (though perhaps with an excessive emphasis on the objections), partly because it reveals the effect on the house of the change of government. The official spokesman insisted that the bill contemplated neither forced labour nor conscription, and that apart from the compulsory census everything else in it was

The image shows a sample National Registration Certificate. It is a rectangular document with a decorative border. At the top, it says "This is to Certify that". Below this, there are three lines for handwritten information: (a) Name, (b) Occupation, and (c) of [Address]. The handwritten entries are "John Smith", "Clerk", and "50 Green Avenue Rushley". Below this, it says "has been Registered under the NATIONAL REGISTRATION ACT, 1915." There is a circular stamp on the right side. At the bottom left, there is a line for the "Signature of Holder." with the handwritten name "John Smith". Below the signature, it says "GOD SAVE THE KING." At the very bottom, there are three small labels: "(a) Name.", "(b) Occupation.", and "(c) Postal Address.".

A NATIONAL REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

ages of fifteen and sixty-five, not being a member of His Majesty's forces nor coming under other specified exceptions (as lunatics, for instance), should be registered, with particulars of which the most significant showed whether each individual were single or married, whether responsible for children or other dependents, and if so how many, whether employed by or under a government department, whether skilled in and able and willing to perform any work other than his or her present employment, and if so, what.

It is worth while to say something of the manner in which the bill passed the House of Commons, partly because it represents pretty

permissive. The opposition, which was in considerable numbers, objected that its ultimate purpose was conscription, and its true begetters not a convinced and united cabinet but, according to taste, the Tory section of the government or Viscount Northcliffe. This opposition would have been a good deal more formidable if the recent crisis had not persuaded most of the supporters of the late government of the immediate need for more effectively organizing the British effort and if it had not also installed an administration which could count on the solid support of the Unionist members and on some Labour co-operation: there might have been considerably fewer Liberal



VIEW OF SALONIKA FROM AN ALLIED WARSHIP

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

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members to feel with Sir Alfred Mond that if government declared conscription indispensable, no one would vote against it, and that therefore to oppose a measure because it might facilitate conscription was absurd; there would hardly have been a Labour member to argue, as Mr. Henderson did, that registration gave the best chance of preserving the voluntary system, and that it must be compulsory since the attempt at voluntary registration had produced from the eight million households canvassed only about 45 per cent. of replies: there might have been more Liberal members to fear with Mr. Aneurin Williams that the bill marked the end of England as a beacon of freedom, and was a tragedy worse than war, or even to suspect with Mr. R. C. Lambert—who believed in the war because he regarded it as a Liberal war—that it marked the beginning of Prussianizing, and indeed of Russianizing: there would almost certainly have been more Conservative members to wish with Sir Frederick Banbury that the words “and willing” * should be left out of section 3 of the bill.

On the second reading in the House of Commons there were only thirty dissentients, and on the third only one.

Effect of the National Registration Act

Those who feared and those who hoped that the act would be a step on the road to conscription proved to be right, and it was a first step which counted for much; registration made the Derby scheme possible, and the failure of the Derby scheme made conscription inevitable.

Throughout the summer the campaign for and against compulsion raged uninterruptedly. In the early autumn it produced an important incident, when on September 7th the Trades Union Congress unanimously adopted a resolution which “*emphatically protested against the sinister efforts of a section of the reactionary press in formulating newspaper policies for party purposes, and attempting to foist on this country conscription, which always proves a burden to*

* “Whether he is skilled in and able and willing to perform any work other than the work (if any) at which he is at the time employed, and, if so, the nature thereof.”

the workers and will divide the nation at a time when absolute unanimity is essential,” and asserted that “no reliable evidence had been produced to show that the voluntary system of enlistment is not adequate to meet all the empire’s requirements.” This protest was reinforced by a large section of the press which was not reactionary, and still more, perhaps, by menacing symptoms of labour unrest, whose causes were not removed when threats of strikes in the Welsh mines and on the railways were tided over by concessions, nor when the Trades Union Congress was much impressed by a speech in which Mr. Lloyd George besought its members to keep their constituents to their bargain in the matter of dilution.

Value of the Register

When the register was finished (in August) the recruiting authorities were given the cards of all men between eighteen and forty-one, those of men in reserved occupations being starred, so that it was now possible for the local organizations to canvass every man not considered indispensable to industry. This canvass was supported by all the resources of advertising, military displays, and appeals from distinguished individuals, including the king: it also received some assistance from a series of Zeppelin raids.⁴

Meanwhile military events were giving no cause to hope that the armies already mobilized would suffice for victory, and indeed the efforts of the British army were producing very little effect while the claims on it were increasing. In July our government had persuaded the French that for the rest of the year the Entente effort in the west should be limited to an active defensive, but on August 20th Joffre persuaded Kitchener to release him from this agreement, and on September 25th began his Champagne offensive. At the same time the French had in Sarraill the embarrassment of an officer who was unemployed in spite of generally recognized competence and (what was more important) of immaculate republicanism: to find him employment became the more urgent as Briand’s influence in the cabinet increased.⁵ By the end of August such considerations had brought the French govern-

HOPELESSNESS OF THE BALKAN SITUATION

ment (hitherto the rigid champion of the Western theatre of war) to intimate to that of Great Britain its willingness for the formation of an army of the East, although in the interest of the Champagne battle the embarkation of the first divisions was not to begin till October 10th. By that time the

abandoned, and on October 11th the British authorities decided, with a characteristic mixture of compromise and procrastination, to send six divisions to Egypt, ready to intervene at Suvla or Salonika or wherever else might seem best.

As late as September 28th, Sir Edward



HOW THE WOUNDED WERE EVACUATED ON THE SALONIKA FRONT

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

Entente situation in the Balkans was hopelessly compromised. Serbia, partly because of her own intransigence in relation to Bulgaria, partly because of the bad diplomacy of her allies, was inexorably doomed to at least temporary destruction. Bulgaria was fighting against her, and Venizelos had failed to bring Greece in on her side. The British general staff could see no hope in a Balkan campaign, or in anything but perseverance in the Champagne and Gallipoli attacks. Yet both of these were soon to be

Grey had told the world that "we were prepared to give our friends in the Balkans all the support in our power, in the manner that would be most welcome to them": a fortnight sufficed to show that if we had the will we had not the power to help, and a month to write a *finis Serbiæ* that looked as final as any epitaph. In England there was some sorrow and more shame: but not very much of either, for the Balkans were far away, and there was care enough much nearer. The chief tribute of mourning was

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Sir Edward Carson's resignation from the cabinet. In France Delcassé resigned, and that had an immediate importance, because it led to Briand's succeeding Viviani as prime minister: now Briand was Lloyd George's friend, and Sarraïl's, and an enthusiastic believer in the eastern theatre of war: so it happened that Joffre was sent



LORD DERBY

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

to England to urge our co-operation in the Salonika enterprise, with the result that four of the six divisions destined for Egypt were ordered to Macedonia instead. In the event, they were to stay there and to receive reinforcements because their withdrawal would have meant the fall of Briand and the accession to power of Clemenceau, which would have been extremely, perhaps intolerably, disagreeable to Poincaré, the president of the republic. The Salonika expedition, conceived as an assistance to Serbia, was launched too late for that purpose, to meet political necessities: it marked the failure of the 1915 offensives in the west and the

east alike; it was a serious additional drain on man-power. Such was its main significance: that it had some military value, which in the end became considerable, is also true.

Early in October Lord Derby was appointed to take general charge of the intensified recruiting campaign based on the national register. His chief contribution was the group-system, under which the male population of military age was divided into forty-six groups, the first twenty-three groups containing single men, one group for each annual class, the others the married men of corresponding ages. Men were then invited to attest, so that the authorities might call them up for military service as they were required: for the men the advantages were that they got the decision off their minds, and saw at least a good many of those whom they thought morally obliged to go before them taken first, while the authorities gained by being able to foresee the number of recruits at their disposal. Lord Derby promised that the single men should be called up before the married, and on November 2nd Mr. Asquith confirmed this promise and declared that the difference between voluntarists and conscriptionists was purely one of expediency, so that though he believed Lord Derby's scheme would be a success, yet if it failed he would not have the faintest hesitation or doubt in recommending legal obligation, in which case the single men should be taken first.

The tenderness with which government and public regarded the married man was throughout the war remarkable. It was clearly well that his dependents should be looked after: why he should be given a better chance of surviving than other men was less evident: to send married men to the wars is to make widows and orphans: but it might be argued that to condemn young women to lifelong spinsterhood and young men to death without issue brings crueller pain to individuals and greater loss to the State; yet it was always assumed that the married should not be exposed to the risk of death except as a last resort, and this assumption had a real influence on the process by which the British people accepted conscription.

THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1916

On December 11th, enlistment for the groups was discontinued : two and a quarter million men had attested during the two months that the scheme had been in operation, and over a quarter of a million had actually enlisted. The government decided that the number of single men still unattested (over a million) was so considerable, and the prospect of continuing by the Derby system to find the number of men required so doubtful, that it was its duty to institute compulsion. It met with some Radical opposition, of which the most important element was Sir John Simon's resignation of the home secretaryship. What was more serious was the opposition of the leaders of trade unions and other labour organizations, who continued to asseverate their irreconcilable opposition to conscription ; but it became clear that they did not intend, even if they were able, to back their principles with industrial action, and in the event they approved the continuance in office of the three Labour ministers after the Military Service Act had been passed.

On January 19th, 1916, all single men in Great Britain, and in May all married men of military age, were made liable to compulsory military service. Exemptions were allowed for those whose civilian occupations were of greater national importance, or whose calling up would entail excessive hardship, or who were physically incapacitated, or who had a conscientious objection to combatant service : such exemptions were to be granted by tribunals representing local knowledge and the military authorities, with the possibility of appeal up to a central tribunal. There were 2,000 local tribunals, 70 appeal tribunals, and the central tribunal. Most of their work was a matter of settling what men were indispensable to war-time industrial arrangements, but public attention was especially attracted by the cases of conscientious objection, though they formed only about 2 per cent. of the total claims.

So in a year of office the new government had done this at least : it had made available

for military purposes all the manhood of the nation, with a small exception in the interests of conscience. Towards the end of the second year of war the British people was comprehensively organized for the purposes of war : that is not to say that it was alto-



SIR JOHN SIMON

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

gether wisely or fairly organized, or that it ought not to have been sooner organized : neither is it to say that the effort to maintain voluntarism had not been worth making or well made : what is fairly certain is that it was time to abandon it, and that the mode of abandonment was highly characteristic of the British State, from the tentative beginning, through the bitter controversy (often doctrinaire or silly on the one side and vulgar or stupid on the other), down to the exceptions in favour of the conscientious objectors and the Irish.



U 35 TORPEDOING A BRITISH MERCHANT VESSEL
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CHAPTER VI

KUT, DUBLIN, JUTLAND

THE legislation which brought the British people at war into an organization something like complete, if alloyed with rather more than the admixture of compromise and error inseparable from political affairs, was not the only outcome of the first year of coalition government. There is space here for only the slightest notice of the most considerable of the other events of that time; but some notice is indispensable.

At sea, sixteen months elapsed between the battle of the Dogger Bank on January 24th, 1915, and the great fight off Jutland; nevertheless the sea was in this period, as throughout the war, a principal, even a dominant, factor. Allied warships and troopships moved about the oceans hardly threatened and almost unhampered: passage was denied to all the enemy's vessels except submarines. These last were indeed by

themselves a weapon very seriously damaging to the Allies, though they were not yet so exploited as actually to threaten them with defeat. The sea was useless without ships: the German calculation was that to sink ships at a fast-enough rate would deprive the Allies of some, in the best case, of all of its value. The plan was the more tempting because it struck first and most heavily at Great Britain. By the end of 1915 nearly 1,000 ships had been put out of action: the rise of freights on Burmese rice from 21s. to 150s. a ton, and on Argentine wheat from 18s. to 150s., gives some measure of the effect of this destruction, though it must be remembered that some of the difference was caused by the ship-owners, whose profits, in spite of the excess profits tax, increased by as much as 543 per cent.¹

Yet during this period, and indeed till the winter of 1915-16, the tonnage situation,



HOW THE SEA-WAYS WERE KEPT EARLY IN THE WAR

A British cruiser convoying merchantmen.

From a Drawing by Norman Wilkinson.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

though inconvenient, was not really dangerous. The demand for ships was greater than before the war, and the supply smaller, so that freights rose and some contrivance was necessary to ensure the carriage of indispensable commodities; but as yet there were ships enough, if only they were intelligently utilized, for all necessary purposes. A series of expedients was adopted to meet these conditions. From the first ships needed for direct government service were requisitioned, at freights fixed by a mixed board of ship-owners and officials: these freights were in 1914 somewhat above the market level, but it passed them in 1915, and later continued its upward course. Then, in the autumn of 1915, one committee was appointed to arrange, by compulsion where there was need, that adequate tonnage should be available for the importation of grain, and another to prevent the employment of ships on unnecessary or relatively unimportant work; while a little later a third committee was set to reduce the delays caused to imports by inefficiency and congestion at the ports, delays hardly less considerable than those due to actual lack of shipping. These and similar arrangements met the case for the time, though (as will be seen) much more drastic measures of supervision and control were imposed by later conditions.²

The German Submarine Menace

Submarines were met not only by defensive arrangements but also by a counter-offensive. If the effect of this was not to destroy submarines as fast as they could be built, at least it did account for trained officers and men at such a rate that by the beginning of 1916 the German naval authorities began to be doubtful whether the campaign were worth continuing unless it was freed from "restrictions of a non-military character"; but the time for this emancipation was not yet, and when it came it was to bring another great power into the association that confronted Germany.

If the submarine was an effective weapon for the Germans, in the blockade the British had a weapon from the first more, and as things turned out much more, effective; and

as for the use of their weapon the Germans paid the price of friction with the United States, so also did the British pay for theirs a similar, though as things turned out a smaller, price. There was another point of similarity: as the German government was attacked both by President Wilson for sinking the *Lusitania* and by its own extremists for not sinking every ship it could reach, so the British government also had to defend itself on two sides—from the president, who found its attempts at cutting off Germany's supplies incompatible with neutral rights; and from many of its own people, who thought it guilty of incompetence verging on treachery so long as it allowed to reach Germany, directly or indirectly, anything of any warlike use which it could by any means have stopped. One great grievance of this kind was met when in August, 1915, cotton, the principal ingredient of modern explosives, was at last made contraband.

America and the British Blockade

Anglo-American disagreement over the general question of blockade received an unpleasant definiteness and publicity in the note of November 5th: this note declared that the British blockade of Germany was ineffective and therefore illegal, and after other arguments of a similar nature claimed a general right for neutrals "to enjoy their international trade free from unusual and arbitrary limitations." An Englishman might think that some of the arguments were disingenuous, and might believe that, even if his government had fallen into some illegality, still the Germans had been guilty of much more illegality and of incomparably more inhumanity; but it was the president's clear right to be neutral and his obvious duty to stand up for the rights of neutrals. The difficulties between his government and ours were in the nature of the case; what made them unnecessarily dangerous was a movement of popular exasperation partly due to the style and tone of the president's composition, as when, for instance, in February, 1916, he said to the people of Kansas: "Where there is a blockade we recognize the right to blockade, but the world needs the wheat of the Kansas fields and of the



THE LAST OF THE LUSITANIA

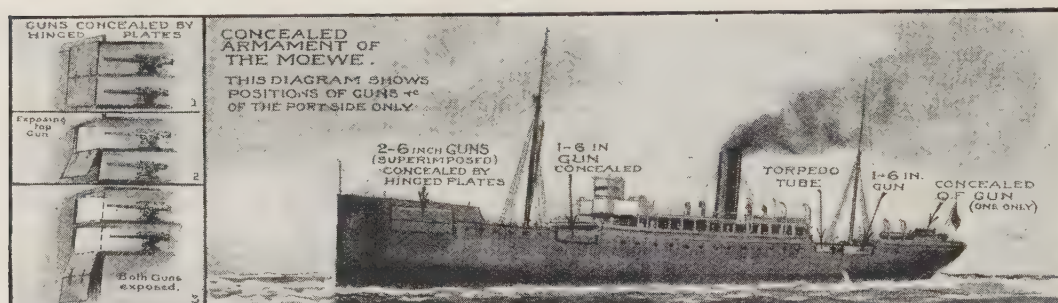
The sinking of this great ship on May 7th, 1915, constituted one of the most notorious outrages of German submarines.
From a Drawing by Norman Wilkinson, based on material supplied by a survivor.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

other great flowering acres of the United States, and we have a right to supply the rest of the world with the product of those fields": and added that it might be necessary "to use the force of the United States to vindicate the rights of American citizens everywhere to enjoy the protection of international law."

Encouraged by Mr. Wilson's determination to treat both sides alike, the German government on March 1st put forward the claim to treat all armed merchantmen as warships, whatever were the consequences to neutrals

decisions, that they were no longer composed of men of the same political tendencies, accustomed to act together. A defect somewhat similar to this and much intensifying its effect was the absence from the war office of a real general staff, partly because of the departure to France of the officers who would naturally have composed it, partly because of Kitchener's practice of attempting to concentrate its functions in himself. An attempt to supply these defects was made in the autumn of 1915. The first step was taken on September 26th, when Sir Archibald Murray



DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE MOEWE, SHOWING HER DISGUISED ARMAMENT AND ITS WORKING

making use of them; for this claim there was no sort of basis in common sense or international law, and the American government refused to consider it. By such unfounded claims and by sporadic outrages on sea and land the Germans, quite as much as the skill of our government or the friendliness of the American people, kept Great Britain and the United States in a relation capable of developing into co-operation, until the time when by their own act they forced the two peoples into virtual alliance.

Finally, before leaving the sea for the time, a word should be said of the work of the *Moewe*, which made her way out from Kiel to the Atlantic in December, 1915, and in a three months' cruise captured fifteen ships and cost Britain upwards of two million pounds.

As well as its advantages, the coalition government had some weaknesses in comparison with its predecessor. Though the cabinet was of the same size, the Dardanelles committee was much larger than the war council, and both it and the cabinet suffered also from this further obstacle to quick and definite

became chief of the imperial general staff: he set about improving the staff machinery, but the reorganization really began on December 23rd, with his replacement by Sir William Robertson, who had been quartermaster-general, and later chief of staff, with the expeditionary force. This officer was a devout "Westerner," convinced that the way to victory was to raise and train larger and larger armies, until the Germans should be unable to resist their attacks on the western front: to this task he bent himself with an admirable efficiency; his first and perhaps his greatest work was to make of the staff at the war office a practicable and adequate machine.

But before his appointment other changes had taken place. On November 2nd the war council was reconstituted: the members were Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, Lord Kitchener, Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Lloyd George, to whom Mr. Bonar Law was added ten days later. The right of final decision was still reserved to the cabinet, but the new body was likely to be more effective than the

EVACUATION OF GALLIPOLI

Dardanelles committee, if only because it was smaller. Its first two results were the abandonment of the Dardanelles adventure and the resignation of Mr. Churchill. The latter found himself unable to continue in a sinecure office when he no longer had any control of policy and when he was convinced that the project of which he had hoped so much was about to be let fall. He resigned therefore on November 12th, and crossed the sea at once to serve his country in the field; this was not, however, the end of his service in the political forum, to which five months later he felt that his duty recalled him.

Mr. Churchill had been right in presuming that his favourite project was doomed: with the responsibilities which by now we had accepted in Mesopotamia and Macedonia, to say nothing of Egypt and of Africa generally, it was impossible that an army should be maintained on the Gallipoli peninsula also. Admiral Wemyss and Commodore Keyes were pressing for authority to make another attempt with ships alone, but in vain³: the cabinet had been at first reluctant to ratify the war council's decision to evacuate the peninsula, but it was itself overruled at the allied consultations which were another of the products of the desire at this time to improve the higher direction, and in the second week in December the decision was finally taken. Thus ended the most tragic episode of the war, with only the consolation that its last act was the least bloody, for the evacuation was effected with an ease that was almost mocking.* At the same time the fruitlessness of the battle of Loos and the supersession of Lord French by Sir Douglas Haig marked an epoch in the history of the war in France.

The year 1915, though by the end of it the British alone had suffered over half a million casualties, had brought to the Allies no fatal disaster, but it had brought them little positive gain. They had obtained a superiority on the western front in numbers and material; that superiority they might hope to maintain, and thereby to prevent any German break-through in France. But it had not yet given them any prospect of breaking through themselves, or of gaining any other brilliant success. Some of the steps which they had taken towards its better utilization have

already been indicated: before going on to see how those steps turned out, a glance may be spared for the one campaign that had been brilliant, the fighting in Mesopotamia.

The operations in that quarter had been in original intention purely defensive, to protect British interests in the Persian Gulf and oil-fields. That purpose was achieved,



SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON

Appointed chief of staff, December, 1915

From a Photograph by G. C. Beresford.

and more than achieved, when at the end of August, 1915, General Townshend and the 6th Division occupied Kut. In November this achievement was celebrated by Mr. Asquith in a speech doubting whether "in the whole course of the war there has been a series of operations more carefully contrived, more brilliantly conducted, and with a better prospect of final success." The campaign was a great feat of courage and endurance, but it might have been suggested that the prime minister's standards of comparison were not high, and that there had been

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

more of venture than of contrivance in Mesopotamian strategy.

What was more serious was Mr. Asquith's hint that there was a further objective in



SIR DOUGLAS (AFTERWARDS EARL) HAIG

Who succeeded Lord French as commander-in-chief of the British armies in France in December, 1915.

From a Photograph by Central News, Limited.

mind. In fact the Indian government had instructed Nixon (in general command in Mesopotamia) to suggest plans for an advance to Bagdad, and in October the British cabinet was so anxious for a striking

success that (in spite of opposition not only from the viceroy, the Indian commander-in-chief, and the general staff at the war office, but also from some of its own members, including at least Lords Kitchener and Curzon) at the beginning of October it ordered General Nixon to advance, with the prospect of reinforcement from the troops in India. The cabinet's justification was the optimism of Nixon and Townshend, but it was more fully informed than they of the Turkish forces which they might have to meet. What happened needs no long telling. After the battle of Ctesiphon, Townshend, with a third of his force casualties, could advance no farther, but had to fall back upon Kut. The striking success had not been won. Much worse was to come: by the end of April, 1916, three attempts to relieve Kut had failed; Townshend, after a siege of 147 days, had to surrender the town, and his British and Indian troops became prisoners of the Turks. The one bright spot of 1915 had become the first black spot of 1916, and the damage suffered by the British government was out of all proportion to the actual military loss, as the British people became aware of the disproportion of the means provided to the foreseeable difficulties, of the incompetence of the Indian administration and the unsatisfactory relations between it and the home authorities, and especially of the unforgivable sufferings of the sick and wounded, sufferings of which the tale went to the limits of belief and past the bounds of tolerance. One curious piece of good fortune was that the prestige in India of the British *raj* suffered hardly at all from the Kut surrender.

There for a time the doings and sufferings of the British people in foreign wars may be left, while some attention must be paid to an event which combined very horribly the worst characteristics of war and of internal politics: that event was the Easter (1916) rebellion in Ireland.

It has been seen that on the day after the declaration of war Mr. Redmond had pledged Ireland to the support of the Allies: but it was to become clear that Ireland was not his to pledge. In return for his promise he got something to show to his party—the



THE BASE CAMP, CAPE HELLES, UNDER SHELL-FIRE, AUGUST, 1915

From the Painting by Norman Wilkinson, in the Imperial War Museum.



SCENE ON WEST BEACH, SUVLA, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS BEFORE THE EVACUATION

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



OBSERVATION TOWER IN A DATE GROVE,
KUT-EL-AMARA

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

Home Rule Act was put on the statute book : but the act did not settle the Irish question, and the party that had secured it was perhaps already no longer the greatest force in Irish politics, and was to lose strength rapidly from that time on. From the first the Sinn Fein officers of the National Volunteers (prominent among them the men who were to lead the 1916 insurrection) set themselves against recruiting for the British army.⁴ At the time they were men little known, and their influence was rated low : there was besides a real improvement in party feeling, though how far from being complete the small number of enlistments from the National Volunteers alone sufficed to show : this incompleteness was accentuated by some failures of tact on the part of the British recruiting authorities, though the extent to which it could have been diminished by the most skilful handling may be doubted. It was unmistakably evident by the end of 1914, when the Sinn Feiners had definitely broken off from the Redmondites, and during the next year the organization of the former party, the Irish Volunteers, and their labour

allies the Citizen Army, were allowed to drill unhindered by a government convinced that their activities could be rendered innocuous by the simple process of ignoring them.

In 1915 the Sinn Feiners were successful enough in persuading Irishmen not to go to the war, the more because British shortage of food made Irish farms prosperous and comfortable places to stay in, but much less so in inducing them to join their own ranks : they had, however, during the first four months of war, when the importation of arms was not legally prohibited, done much to equip their forces. They were also able, then and later, to spread their influence by printed and other propaganda, helped by a government inactive on principle and a Nationalist party eager to denounce the government for every shuffle towards governing to which it could bring itself.

Throughout 1915 the British government was repeatedly warned (by the police, by the under secretary Sir Matthew Nathan, by the southern Unionists) of the danger from Sinn Fein : but the government pre-



INTERIOR OF THE BAZAAR, KUT-EL-AMARA

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.



THE MESOPOTAMIAN EXPEDITION
Pack-mules in the desert.



RUINS OF KUT-EL-AMARA
From Crown Copyright Photographs in the Imperial War Museum.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

ferred to believe Mr. Redmond's assertion that its leaders "did not amount to a row of pins": no precautions were taken, and the second Defence of the Realm Act (March, 1915) had made it even more difficult than ever to obtain convictions against Sinn Feiners. In May, 1915, it was by only one vote that the Volunteers' Council decided against an immediate rising: by July they had captured the Gaelic League: in spite of the efforts of some of the bishops they were joined by many of the younger clergy. Parades of volunteers multiplied and sedition spread; on St. Patrick's Day, 1916, there were 4,555 volunteers drilling in the country and 1,400 in Dublin.

The Irish Rebellion Brewing

The British people meanwhile had little thought for Ireland: they had reason enough to turn their eyes the other way. Some of them felt exasperated that the sister island should be immune from conscription and from food and drink restrictions, hardly conscious of the war except as a source of prosperity: but by far the most, if they felt anything about Ireland, had a very vaguely sentimental sympathy for the Irish people and an almost excessive admiration for Irish regiments. The English music-hall had always found the occasions for its sentimentality in the remoter parts of the British Isles when it did not seek them even further, and most usually in Ireland. It was not till 1918 that a comedian, in a song describing the glories of an infinitely future golden age, ventured on the irony of

"Bringing conscription to Ireland,
After the war."

But the British government had no excuse for withholding its attention from Ireland: by their own conduct its leaders had put her in the forefront of politics: her immense strategical importance was evident if not to them certainly to everyone else, not least to the rulers of Germany: that her disturbed state had had something to do with the time and manner of the war's coming had been often asserted and was difficult to deny. Nor was that either the beginning or the end of her relations to German *Weltpolitik*. There

could be no greater danger to the sea-power of Britain at war than Ireland in hostile or disputed possession. Therefore for some years before the war there had been a process of seducing Ireland to a German connexion. From the beginning of the war extremist organizations in America and Ireland were striving, with German support and with such intermediaries as Sir Roger Casement (formerly of the British consular service), to make use of the seditious inclinations of Fenianism and revolutionary socialism in order to create in Ireland a threat or at least an embarrassment in the flank of Great Britain: of the inclinations of Fenianism some account has already been given: for the impulse to proletarian revolution every possible excuse was given by the disgraceful social condition of Dublin, and a most efficient leadership was supplied by Larkin and Connolly. Weariness of waiting, the need somehow to counteract the rising tide of Entente sympathies in the United States, and the efforts of Casement, brought these tendencies to fruition in the spring of 1916.

Casement's Landing in Kerry

The intending rebels endeavoured to provide themselves with a pretext and to resolve the doubts of the wavering by spreading, with the help of forged documents, the belief that the government had determined to disarm the volunteers: they expected reinforcement from Germany in the form of a shipload of arms and of the personal assistance of Casement, and no doubt hoped for more—some of their followers, at least, for a German invasion and for the cutting of communications with England by German submarines. If anything like such anticipations had been realized, a general and simultaneous rising would have been very far from a forlorn hope. In the failure of the anticipations and the localization of rising there may be discerned at choice the hand of Providence or the luck of the British Empire or the futility of the Irish, or all three: certainly something of the gallantry and competence of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the British army, but no trace of statesmanship or courage in the British government.

On Good Friday (April 21st), Casement

THE EASTER RISING IN DUBLIN

landed from a submarine on the coast of Kerry : he was captured almost immediately, having accomplished nothing. What was more important was that the ship, full of arms, accompanying him was arrested by H.M.S. *Bluebell*, and was sunk by her own crew.

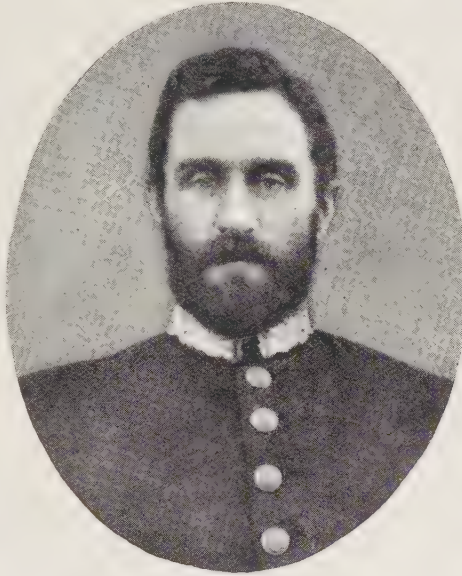
Here was a calamity which might have dissuaded the conspirators from action : it spurred the authorities, not indeed to action, but to the decision to act in ten days or so. Many officers and men (including the officer commanding) were absent on leave : their return and the arrival of further reinforcements were to be awaited, and then, in the week after Easter week, the rebels' headquarters might be raided, their leaders arrested, and their arms seized. But the rebels, too, had heard the news : perhaps they had also heard the decisions of the government. Their counsels were divided ; the majority was for postponing the attempt, and in accordance with this opinion the Sunday papers contained a notice, signed on Saturday by John MacNeill, that, "owing to the very critical position, all orders given to Irish volunteers for to-morrow (Easter Sunday) are hereby rescinded."⁵

On the Sunday, however, the extremists, their previous hopes heightened by the belief (which proved to be true) that Professor MacNeill's order would have put the authorities off their guard, made up their minds to action, expecting that an initial success for the metropolitan insurrection would produce risings all over the country. Early on April 24th "the four city battalions" were instructed to parade "for inspection and route march" : no doubt most of the volunteers assembled conscious of purpose beyond

what was announced : they were used in an attempt to gain control immediately of Dublin and eventually of all Ireland. That attempt might have marked a turning-point in the history of the war, and it did mark a turning-point in the history of the British Islands.

The details of the rising and its suppression are horrible, and for the present purpose unnecessary. The rebels had just not quite force enough for complete success

in their primary project of seizing the capital, and, in the disastrous failure of effective accessions both in Dublin and in the provinces, not nearly enough to hold long against the reinforcements available to the government the gains of their first stroke. Nevertheless those gains were great, and their reconquest was neither easy nor cheap. The plan was to gain immediate possession of the strategic points of the city—the Castle, Trinity College, the Four Courts, the post office, the tele-



SIR ROGER CASEMENT

phone exchange, Jacob's biscuit factory, Boland's flour mills. Helped by the complete surprise of the authorities, and incidentally by the absence of many officers at a race meeting, the insurgents quickly gained most of their objectives ; but in three crucial cases they failed. They were too slow to rush the Castle, the centre of administration and the symbol of the United Kingdom, with a direct telephone wire to the military camp at the Curragh ; they were diverted from the telephone exchange by an old woman's lying tale that it was garrisoned, and thus lost their chance of cutting the government's communications ; they were beaten off by thirty undergraduates and the few loyalists that could be gathered in the immediate neighbourhood

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from Trinity College, which commanded three streets, containing most of the banks and many of the best shops. Had the whole strength of the volunteers thrown itself into the attempt these failures could hardly have taken place: in that case the suppression of the rising would have been immensely, perhaps hopelessly, more difficult.

Effects of the Rebellion

By the morning of the 25th the authorities, still holding so many points of such importance, had at their disposal something over 4,500 men. From that time the insurrection was over: the rebel forces were first cut in two, and then each half was surrounded and gradually reduced. The process was practically finished by the end of the month. The immediate effect of the rebellion had been the loss of some hundreds of lives and some millions of pounds; most of this loss had fallen on others than the British government. Ireland seemed no nearer independence, and certainly England no nearer defeat.

The rebel plans had been well laid, and their hopes not wildly unreasonable, but their calculations were fatally disturbed by the loss of Casement's munition ship and by MacNeill's countermanding order. This disturbance was extended and intensified by the failure of provincial co-operation, itself due, no doubt, in part to those same causes, in part to the prosperity of the countryside, and not least to the efficiency of the Royal Irish Constabulary. In the event, outside County Dublin the rising was insignificant.

Nor had the German alliance proved very helpful; doubtless the revolutionary leaders no longer counted on it after the sinking of the *Aud*, except for their reasonable expectation of German reinforcement if only their initial success were considerable, and if only they could hold on to it. Some of their followers may have hoped for more; all that they got was a series of zeppelin raids over eastern England on April 24th, 25th, and 26th, and a cruiser attack on Lowestoft and Yarmouth, activities which may have been connected with the rebellion, but which, though they did some harm to England, did very little good to Ireland.

After the crushing of the insurrection a period of firm government was certainly possible and might perhaps have been even popular. It is probable that the extent of sympathy with the forces of order at the end of Easter week has been exaggerated; such a feeling was very general among the prosperous classes, but it is much more doubtful whether the poorer people, in the capital especially, shared it: certainly it was not encouraged by the policy which the British government adopted. It was decided to punish severely those rebel leaders whose participation could be established, while continuing the attempt to conciliate the rest of the Irish. At the same time the seriousness of the revolt was systematically minimized, so that both in Great Britain and abroad the notion spread that a mere street riot had been clumsily and fiercely suppressed. As the latest historian of the rising says, "The Sinn Féin legend of 'the brutal heel of British tyranny,' afterwards developed and spread broadcast in so masterly a fashion, was thus given a good start. Yet the rebellion was certainly no mere desperate adventure of a few hot-headed youths, which was from the first foredoomed to failure. It had been carefully planned with the aid of the best military brains in Europe, and but for a series of accidents—fortunate or unfortunate, according to the point of view—it might very well have succeeded in effecting all that the Germans expected of it, namely the enforced withdrawal of a very large body of British troops from the western front at a very critical period of the war." ⁶

Executions and Deportations

Between the 3rd and the 12th of May fifteen men, of whose guilt there could be no doubt if for Irishmen rebellion was a crime, were executed, and others suffered lighter sentences or had death sentences commuted: at and about the same time 3,000 were deported. These measures were perfectly justifiable unless the British State was in essence illegitimate, and therefore without the right of defending itself. But they had unfortunate results. In a time of such confusion there were among so many deportees



LIBERTY HALL, DUBLIN, AFTER THE EASTER REBELLION, 1916

The Sinn Fein headquarters, where the rising was planned and orders issued for the outbreak. The building was shelled by a gunboat on the Liffey.

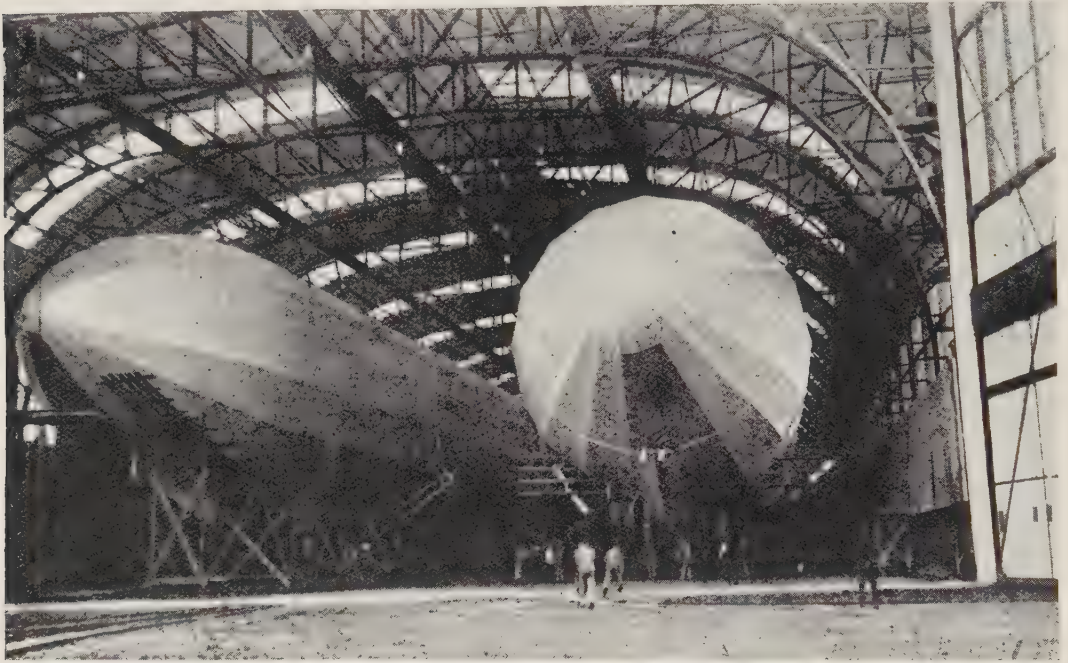


RUINED BUILDINGS IN SACKVILLE STREET, DUBLIN, AFTER THE EASTER FIGHTING

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some who were innocent : this aroused some resentment, but much more serious were the effects of the executions. They were easily defensible (except for the shooting without trial of three innocent prisoners by a British officer who was afterwards held to be insane) : unhappily, in the words of the Royal Commission on the rebellion, " Irishmen no doubt appreciate the maintenance of order, but they appear to have an invete-

strengthened by the government's habit of tolerance even more than by its spasm of severity. From May 12th to the 18th, Mr. Asquith was in Ireland (mostly in Dublin), all good nature and open-mindedness, talking freely to the arrested (though not, as was maliciously suggested, shaking hands with them), and even going so far in his desire to avoid offence as to restrain himself from any public show of gratitude to those Irish-



ZEPPELINS IN THEIR SHED AT FRIEDRICHSHAFEN

rate prejudice against the punishment of disorder." In this case the prejudice was deepened by the manner of the punishment, the secrecy of the trials, the day-by-day additions to the list of " martyrs " : so that very soon after the rebellion was over it was becoming an inspiration to be cherished instead of a folly to be reprobated. Bishops melted into sympathy for the " poor boys " who were being executed ; Mr. Dillon grew proud of the rebels and detested the government which had drowned in " a sea of blood " both the rebellion and the achievements of the Nationalist party.

These tendencies to sympathize with the rebels and to admire their efforts were

men who had remained loyal. The effect was not to work a change of heart in the champions of separation, but to shake their conviction that the rising had been a failure and to revive their faith in the employment of force against the British government : the more so when the prime minister, on his return to parliament, announced the breakdown of the existing machinery of Irish government, and the appointment of Mr. Lloyd George to seek, in concert with the Irish leaders, some compromise enabling the Government of Ireland Act to be put into immediate effect.

The first fruit of this policy was the proposal to make the act operative as soon as

BATTLE OF JUTLAND

an amending bill should have been passed for the retention of Irish members at Westminster and for the exclusion of six Ulster counties. Were these provisions, the last especially, to be temporary or permanent? On that question the arrangement broke down: the six counties were willing to accept it if it were to be permanent, though naturally Unionists elsewhere were less easily contented: if it were provisional, the Nationalists, or some of them, would agree. In truth, even if Mr. Lloyd George's proposal could have been made effective, it would have split the Nationalists, split the Unionists, and satisfied none of the Sinn Feiners: it was an attempt to paper over not merely a crack but a volcano. On July 24th the attempt was abandoned; the machinery that had broken down was to be re-started, well or ill: Lord Wimborne was once more lord lieutenant, and Mr. Duke, a Unionist lawyer, was made chief secretary. It was the end of the immediate effects of the rebellion.

But only of the immediate effects: there were other effects which could not be neutralized or reversed: an active (it was to prove a dominant) section of Irishmen had been resolved that separation might yet be had, and that force was the means to get it. If there had been bitterness in Ireland before, now there was bitterness in England too: British prestige abroad, and the prestige at home of the British government, had alike been lowered: one of the perennial difficulties of the British people had received a new form and a new force.

Jutland: The First Report

Scarcely a month after the last black week of April the English sky was darkened again by a cloud much nearer than the disaster of Kut, and at once much stranger and much more visible than the bloody gloom of Dublin: not that the sea fight off Jutland was itself deplorable but that the news of it was in effect tragic. As the discretion of the authorities made the Irish affair in the end more damaging by minimizing the extent to which it had been formidable, so their candour made the naval action quite unnecessarily depressing by publishing its cost without calling attention to its fruits.

The first announcement was in Germany, where the admiralty reported on June 1st as follows: "During an enterprise directed northward, our High Sea Fleet encountered on May 21st the main part of the English fighting fleet, which was considerably superior to our own forces. During the afternoon a series of heavy engagements developed between Skagerrak and Horn Reef, which were successful for us, and which also continued during the whole of the night. In these engagements, as far as is known up to the present, were destroyed by us the large battleship *Warspite*, the battle-cruisers *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable*, also two armoured cruisers apparently of the Achilles type, one small cruiser, the new flagships of the destroyer squadrons, the *Turbulent*, *Nestor*, and *Alcaster*,* a large number of torpedo-boat destroyers, and one submarine. By observations, which are free from any objections, it was stated that a large number of English battleships suffered damage from our ships' artillery, and from the attacks of our torpedo-boat flotillas during the day and night engagements. Among others the large battleship *Marlborough* was hit by a torpedo, as has been confirmed by prisoners. Several of our ships rescued portions of the crews of the sunk English ships, among whom were only two survivors of the *Indefatigable*. On our side the small cruiser *Wiesbaden* was sunk by hostile artillery fire during the day engagements, and the *Pommern* during the night by a torpedo. The fate of the *Frauenlob*, which is missing, and of some torpedo-boats which have not yet returned, is unknown. The High Sea Fleet returned to our ports during the day."

German Exultation

This report was naturally welcomed by the Germans, from the Kaiser downwards, with the most joyful enthusiasm: they were, as was intended, convinced that in a pitched battle between the High Sea Fleet and the more numerous Grand Fleet the former had won a great victory and inflicted much more damage than it had suffered. With neutrals also the German version had the inestimable advantage of getting in first, but they were

* NOTE.—A mistake for *Acasta*.

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LION LEADING THE BATTLE CRUISERS, JUTLAND

From a Water-colour Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

by this time so suspicious of *communiqués* and had remained so much under the influence of British naval prestige that they were in general inclined to suppose the German success a good deal smaller than was claimed, and that some of them saw special significance in the fact that the British and not the

Germans had remained on the scene of action. By the evening of June 2nd the admiralty was convinced that its own people ought to be kept no longer in doubt, and that it was important for neutrals also to have some corrective to the German version. At 7 p.m. its secretary issued the following announce-



Defence

Warrior

Lion

Princess Royal

THE BATTLE CRUISERS AT JUTLAND

From a Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.



SOUTHAMPTON IN THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND
from a water-colour Drawing by W. L. Wilde, R.A.

ADMIRALTY'S DEPRESSING REPORT ON JUTLAND



SIR JOHN (AFTERWARDS VISCOUNT) JELlicoe

From a Photograph by Alice Hughes.

damaged ; one battleship reported sunk by our destroyers during a night attack ; two light cruisers were disabled, and probably sunk. The exact number of enemy destroyers disposed of cannot be ascertained with any certainty, but it must have been large."

The facts could not have been presented in a form better calculated to test British steadfastness : the initial admission of heavy casualties, the vagueness of the damage attributed to the enemy, the long list of named ships of ours that were certainly lost, the short and unspecific list of vessels of theirs that might perhaps have been sunk—these things looked very like a naval defeat, a disaster which for long the British people had not known and which for some time they had not been able even to conceive. At the best they did not look like a crushing victory, and anything less seemed to the British people a strange and melancholy



SIR DAVID (AFTERWARDS EARL) BEATTY

From a Photograph by Speaight, Limited.

ment : "On the afternoon of Wednesday, May 31st, a naval engagement took place, off the coast of Jutland. The British ships on which the brunt of fighting fell were the Battle Cruiser Fleet and some cruisers and light cruisers, supported by four fast battleships. Among those the losses were heavy. The German Battle Fleet, aided by low visibility, avoided prolonged action with our main forces, and soon after these appeared on the scene the enemy returned to port, though not before receiving severe damage from our battleships. The battle-cruisers *Queen Mary*, *Indefatigable*, *Invincible*, and the cruisers *Defence* and *Black Prince* were sunk. The *Warrior* was disabled, and after being towed for some time had to be abandoned by her crew. It is also known that the destroyers *Tipperary*, *Turbulent*, *Fortune*, *Sparrowhawk*, and *Ardent* were lost, and six others are not yet accounted for. No British battleships or light cruisers were sunk. The enemy's losses were serious. At least one battle-cruiser was destroyed, and one severely

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end to any engagement in which its navy took part without being vastly outnumbered, a handicap of which in this case there could be no question. It was not true, indeed, that the navy had never met reverse, still less that it had always been assured of triumph : but at least for a century and more this had been true, and for generations it had seemed part of the unchanging order of the universe. Along with the hardening of this tradition into an axiom there had developed a popular

the reports that leave was to be extended) of the rumour of a great battle in the North Sea. There was reason enough, then, why the British people should be disappointed and depressed : yet it would be unjust to suppose that there were many whose courage was undermined by disappointment or whose resolution was shaken by depression.

The Times of June 3rd was a little less than reasonably optimistic when it began its first leading article : " We have sustained,



WARSPITE AND WARRIOR AT JUTLAND

From a Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

superstition that the unlimited offensive must in all circumstances necessarily be the controlling principle of any British admiral's tactics. The report of Jutland made it seem that the axiom was shattered and, with more truth, that the principle was of something less than universal applicability. But what made these disillusionments the more grave was that the British people's confidence in the navy, besides being absolute, was relatively enormous : the competence of the government might be doubted, or the equipment of the air force or the training of the army, but not in any way the adequacy of the navy. Even among soldiers this notion of the navy's superiority was to be found, and how much was expected from the fleet may be roughly measured by the extreme frequency in the trenches (where it was even commoner than

though we have also inflicted, serious losses off the coast of Jutland . . . there is nothing in the event to have a material effect on the naval situation" ; but it was hardly more than just when it went on to say of the reaction on the British people, " It will sting them to fresh exertion, it will dispel much idle and harmful optimism, it will steel their unalterable resolution."

The issue in which these words occurred contained, besides the two reports already quoted, a second communication from the secretary of the admiralty, who, after admitting that we had lost eight destroyers, made the following claims. " One dreadnought battleship of the Kaiser class was blown up in an attack by British destroyers, and another . . . is believed to have been sunk by gun-fire. Of three German battle-

EFFECTS OF JUTLAND

cruisers—two of which it is believed were the *Derfflinger* and the *Lützow*—one was blown up, another was heavily engaged by our Battle Fleet and was seen to be disabled and stopping, and the third was observed to be seriously damaged. One German light cruiser and six German destroyers were sunk, and at least two more German light cruisers were seen to be disabled. Further reported hits were observed on three other German

the High Sea Fleet, which had been able to get away in the mist, and that by the evening of June 2nd the Grand Fleet was again ready for sea.

This was in truth the essence of the matter as it affected the strategical situation: Admiral Jellicoe's claim is just, that "the High Sea Fleet never again, up to the end of 1917, ventured much outside 'the Heligoland triangle,' and even on August 19th,



CREW OF *ACASTA* CHEERING THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AT JUTLAND

From a Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

battleships . . . a German submarine was rammed and sunk."

On June 4th there appeared an appreciation by Mr. Churchill, who, though now independent and indeed critical of the government, had been given access to official information: he argued that supremacy depended on super-dreadnoughts; that in that regard we had not lost, perhaps even had gained, on balance; that in secondary ships the German losses were more serious than ours; and that though fog and flight had prevented final decision, still we had now the advantage of knowing all about German equipment. That same evening a final admiralty *communiqué* explained that the Grand Fleet had very quickly driven off

1916, the much reduced fleet made precipitately for home as soon as it was warned by its zeppelin scouts of the approach of the Grand Fleet." ⁷ The same lesson is enforced by Admiral von Tirpitz's statement that "at the beginning of the war the fact had not emerged so clearly as it did later that the British fleet fulfilled its *raison d'être* simply by lying quietly at Scapa Flow": Jutland had something to do with that fact's emergence, as Captain Persius* knew when he wrote, after the Armistice, that "the losses sustained by the German fleet were enormous, in spite of the fact that luck was on our side, and on June 1st, 1916, it was clear to everyone of intelligence that

* The leading German naval journalist.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

this fight would be and must be the only one to take place. Those in authority have often admitted this openly."

In that sense it was a victory hardly less complete than those which had most gloriously preceded it: even by the test of material losses it can be shown that the early British reports were misleading, and that the Germans had suffered a reverse: as to Admiral Jellicoe's tactics, no doubt he might have made greater gains if he had taken greater risks, but it is as far as possible from certain that there were any gains in prospect commensurate with the risks of an unlimited offensive.

There was one element noted in relation to the Jutland story which was disagreeable if not disquieting: that was the revelation of the inferiority in some respects of our equipment when compared with that of the Germans. We were short of destroyers, our larger ships were too lightly armoured, our protection against torpedoes was inadequate, so were our provision for aerial reconnaissance and our searchlights and other arrangements for night fighting. Yet these were not the

reasons why Jutland at the time spread gloom over Great Britain, and why indeed the first reaction to it was more melancholy than that to any other incident of the war. That was because the British people was learning the painful lesson that even its navy possessed no magic, and that even its admirals must have other impulses besides gallantry: no doubt the lesson was made necessary more by the century that had passed without a naval battle than by any deterioration in the modern navy: it was none the less unpleasant, and it was given violence by the extreme clumsiness of its announcement.

A few days later the British people suffered another shock; the ship which was conveying Lord Kitchener to Russia struck a mine and sank, and the field-marshal and his staff were drowned. He had done his great work, perhaps the greatest that any one man did for British victory, and alone of all the prominent figures on both sides he had the fortune to die suddenly and by the act of his country's enemies.



H.M.S. HAMPSHIRE

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.



A RUINED SOMME VILLAGE

From the Water-colour Drawing by Muirhead Bone, in the Tate Gallery

CHAPTER VII

THE SOMME, AND MR. LLOYD GEORGE

IT is time to return to the main story. The story of a people will never be fully told, because its activities and sufferings are infinite: the historian is fortunate when they are concentrated, and in the middle of the war something of that sort had happened. The history of the British people was passing on the battle-fields of France with more of unity than when in earlier days its stage had been the ships of Drake or Nelson, or the floor of the House of Commons or of Westminster Hall, or the workshops of Arkwright or Stephenson.

In 1916 by far the majority of those British citizens who were male and adult and whole had fought or were fighting or expected soon to fight in France. Smaller and less respectable sections of the population have often enough been taken to be the nation. But that was not all: the soldiers had for them not only their numbers, but

also they knew and all the world knew that on their fates depended the hearts and on their deeds the hopes of almost all the men and women who were left at home. For the British 1916 is the Somme, and Verdun; as for the French it is Verdun, and the Somme.

By now all expectations of an easy triumph had vanished: the French army could no longer be supposed capable of dealing by itself with the German: the Russian steam-roller had become a jest, not yet so bitter as it was soon to be: the prediction that economic factors alone must make the war a matter of months at the most had been falsified, and its conspicuous falsity tended dangerously to encourage the notion that war, unlike all other human employments, was unaffected by economic considerations. The navy was an instrument of great and increasing power, but it was beginning to

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

appear, and after Jutland it was accepted as certain, that not from thence could come the culminating victory: nor was it easy, after Gallipoli and Kut, any longer to believe that British effort could do more to win the war in the Levant than in France.

an arsenal and a transport service had been mistaken: the British army must be made as large as possible, and, if that had already been done, at least it must be subjected to no reduction.

This army, in size now comparable with

the armies of conscription but as yet composed almost exclusively of volunteers, underwent its greatest test, performed its greatest feats, and suffered its first great disillusion, in the battle of the Somme. That battle has a good claim to have exceeded all others in danger, discomfort, and fatigue: and when it was over it seemed to have been of all battles the most resultless. Yet it was not undertaken without good cause and high hopes,



THE FIGHTING MAN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
Equipped with anti-gas mask and goggles and burning-oil distributor.

From a Cartoon by A. Forestier.

The British people was resolved that the defeat of Germany was necessary not only to its own honour and interest but also to the safety and decency of civilization: it was convinced, besides, that to attain this object it must use without stint all its resources, and especially that its earlier belief that it could pay its full share of the price of victory by supplying the alliance with a bank and

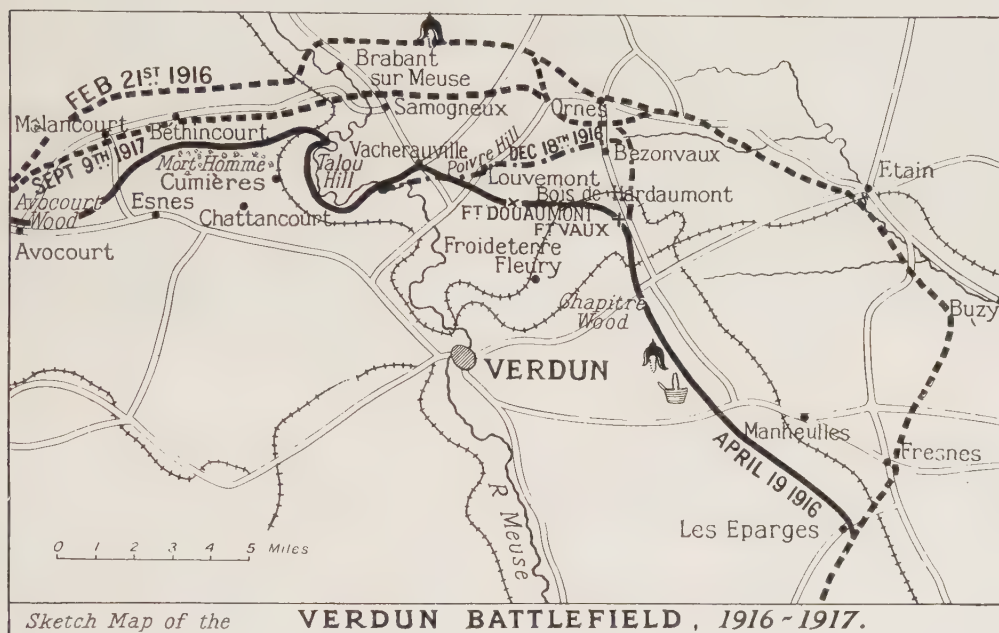
nor were the men who fought it unworthy successors of the old army, whose bearing, under the instruction of its survivors, they strove to emulate.

At the beginning of 1916 the forces of the alliance were approaching their maximum: ¹ France had her 1916 and 1917 classes trained but still unused: Britain had men enough almost to double the size of her

THE THRUST AGAINST VERDUN

armies in France: moreover, her munition supply was now adequate, and was expanding all the time, as also was the French production, and this factor was the more considerable since both Russia and Italy had ample reserves of men if only they could be supplied with arms. Naturally, therefore, the Allies projected a combined attack, and naturally the Germans sought to anticipate the assault: they determined that the heart

tively to cut Britain off from the world, nor that the degree of success which might be expected was enough to warrant the risk of antagonizing neutrals: so far, indeed, was this view from acceptance that in April, after the protest of President Wilson against the sinking of the *Sussex*, the torpedoing of unwarned merchantmen was discontinued, or at least discontinuance was promised and was partly realized.



of the alliance was Britain, and that a stroke against her was likely to produce the most valuable results. Yet it was hard to see how a direct blow could be aimed at her armies, which, entrenched in the low flat lands of Flanders, were, for the first third of the year at least, protected by the weather. At sea there was always the hope that Scheer might catch a part of the British battle fleet with all of his, and that after one or two such pieces of fortune he might even defeat the whole British navy: but any such result did depend upon fortune and, as has been seen, the Germans were wise not to count on it. More hopeful, or at least more calculable, was the submarine campaign: but the imperial government had not yet been convinced that it might be used effec-

For all these reasons, and others no doubt, it seemed that the best way to paralyse the allies, and even to injure Britain, was to crush or at least to maim the French army; for that would make the western front untenable, a blow which would hit the British as hard as anything short of absolute disaster at sea.

The quarter chosen for attack was Verdun: even if all the results hoped for were not produced, yet, it was supposed, a famous fortress city would have been taken by the heir to the imperial crown. The preparations began at the very beginning of the year, with feints all along the line: this was the time, too, of the supremacy of the Fokker, which gave the Germans for a while the command of the air. On February 21st

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HOW THE DEFENDERS OF VERDUN REACHED THE FIRING LINE
The men had to traverse a labyrinth of communication trenches.

the battle was launched : in the first few days it came near to success : the French high command had not felt sure that Verdun was the danger point : in spite of warnings the precautions taken had been less than all that was possible ; the attackers outnumbered the defenders hugely in men and enormously in guns. They were stopped by sheer courage, and when, on the 27th, Pétain, whom Castelnau had hurriedly thrust into command of the defence, risked his first counter-attack, it was already too late for the German high command to win the victory for which it had set out : perhaps if Verdun had been quickly taken the French front might have been broken, but now it was become just the name of a part of the trench system where there had been a town. It was true that it was a name which meant much to France and that some sort of a victory might still be got, and for that victory the Germans went on struggling, with unchanging stubbornness, though with continually changing tactics : with no less stubbornness the French went on struggling to hold Verdun if they could at a price that seemed

reasonable, and anyway to make the battle cost the attackers so much that, whatever ground they gained, still they should be the losers. By the middle of April the first stage of the battle, or what might even be called the first battle of Verdun, was over : the Germans had paid a great price and had obtained nothing of what they sought.

The French had been unwilling that their task at Verdun should be shared : for the actual defence they would accept no assistance, nor were they anxious to be indirectly helped by the launching of British counter-attacks. According to plan the great operation of the year, from the western side, was to be an offensive on both sides of the Somme : to take any step which would disturb this essential part of the allied plan of campaign would be to give the Germans some of the advantage which they had expected from the Verdun battle ; therefore British relief of the pressure on the French went no further than the taking over of the line as far south as the Somme, and on the whole the first half of 1916 was a quiet time, a time of training and preparation, for the British army.

THE ALLIED OFFENSIVE

Meanwhile the Italians had been driven back with serious losses ; in May the assault on Verdun was begun again, and with a good deal of success ; the Turks were preparing an attack on Egypt : it was high time for the great combined allied offensive.

It began in June : on the 4th the Russians attacked in Bukovina and the Ukraine, on the 8th in Galicia. At the same time the Austrian advance came to an end, the three weeks' battle of the Trentino was over, and on the 25th the Italian recovery began with the recapture of Asiago. On two main fronts, then, the combined operation was going well : there was good news also from subsidiary theatres—the demobilizing of the Greek army, the Sherif of Mecca's revolt against the sultan, British successes in Germany's African colonies. The first half of 1916 ended, in spite of the black days that it had contained, with more cheerful expectations among the Allies than at almost any earlier time : at last, after nearly two years of war, it was a question not merely of frustrating

the efforts of Germany but actually of attempting, with reasonable hopes of success, to turn on the great aggressor. Germany's allies were fully and painfully engaged : she herself, struggling and bleeding at Verdun and in Poland, might be supposed to have little energy to spare : it was not impossible that the great Franco-British blow on the Somme might be the beginning of the end.

What contribution to the common effort were the British capable of making ? They were able to keep open the seas : that was important, because of supplies from far off, especially munitions from America, and at the time (though not for much longer) it was not seriously challenged. But its usefulness to the Allies was mainly indirect : it meant that Britain could obtain the materials she needed and could send soldiers, as many as she could train, to France ; now for the first time she could supply an army on a continental scale.

At the beginning of July, indeed, there were



A ROAD NEAR VERDUN

Showing the devastating effect of the German bombardment.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

fifty-five British divisions in France, nearly half as many as the Germans had on that front, and altogether, at home and abroad, there were five million British citizens under arms—though perhaps “under arms” is a question-begging phrase. The question of the numerical proportion of the men fighting and the men wearing uniform was already raised, notably by Mr. Churchill²: out of every six men recruited, it was argued, only one ever reached the front line trenches,

army was wasteful by comparison with continental armies was its use of officers. This excess was universal: from general headquarters to the infantry battalion the proportion of officers to men was higher in the British than in any European army. There was, moreover, a strong tendency for the British officer to be of higher rank than the Frenchman or German doing equivalent work. For these reasons our government had to pay for every thousand men in uni-



ON THE ITALIAN FRONT: THE VALLEY OF THE ISONZO.

Gorizia is seen on the right, Monte Podgora on the left.

From a Drawing by W. G. de Glehn, A.R.A., in the Imperial War Museum.

and therefore “combing-out” was much more badly needed in the army than outside it. This allegation was by no means wholly false: the Black Prince and Wolsey and Wellington had all found that the first requirement of their armies was good food and plenty of it. That demand was as urgent as ever, and it was satisfied as nearly to perfection as was humanly possible: British soldiers were by far the best fed and clothed of all the combatants, till the arrival of the Americans: the disadvantages were that the cost per man was higher than in other armies, and the proportion of men absorbed by supply and transport services being so large, the cost per rifle very much higher. No doubt the disproportion was increased by shirking, but there is no reason to believe that this factor was considerable.

Another respect in which the British

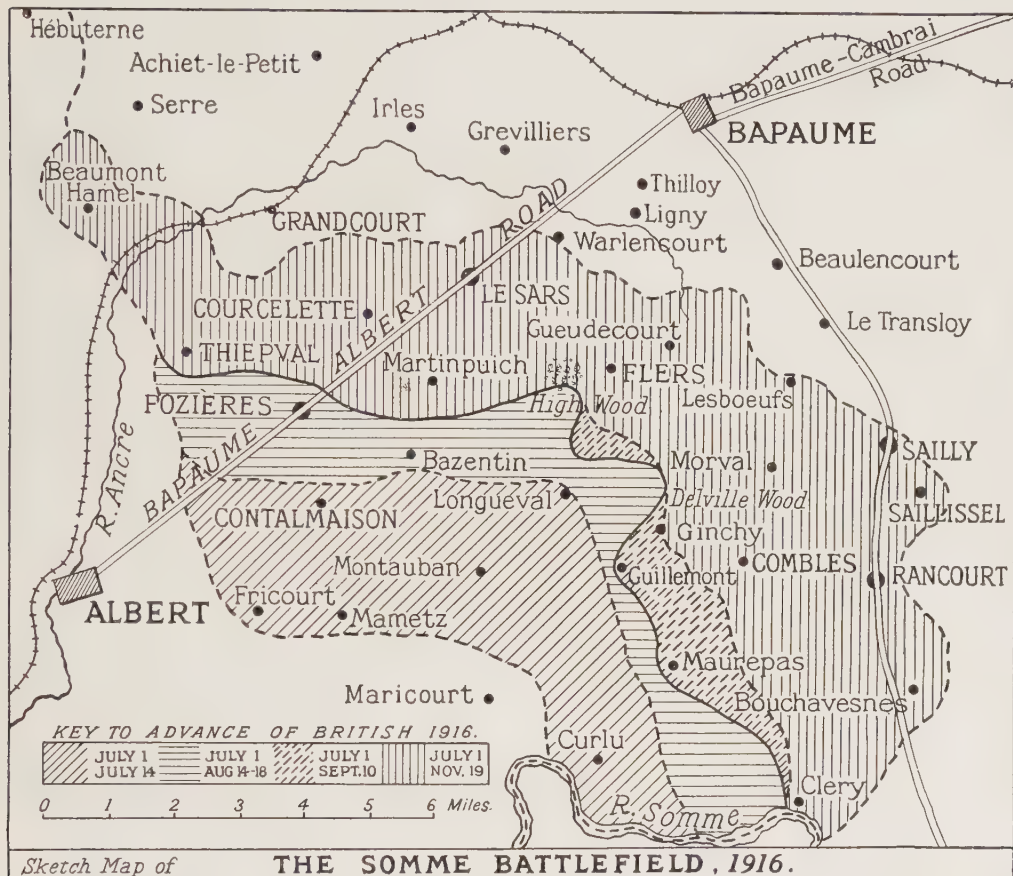
form a much larger sum on account of officers than any of its allies or rivals. No doubt this sum was almost negligible compared with the whole cost of the war; but there were more serious inconveniences. The army which had undergone the greatest expansion in the shortest time was necessarily the worst supplied with trained officers, and it was the very army which made the most prodigal use of officers; it was also necessarily the one which in peace time had attracted the smallest share of the national intelligence, and in fact, for various reasons, this was more than necessarily so.

These defects had been emphasized by accident—the death of General Grierson, the personal misfortunes of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, the political ones of Sir Henry Wilson. Something might have been done to supply them by a systematic utilization

BRITISH TRENCH-FIGHTING METHODS

of the new material : the army now contained all the men of Britain who were not unfit for war (besides many who were) : most of them had no previous training, but many had all the necessary qualities, and the war was so novel that a little intelligence might not unreasonably be considered a good substitute

trench made more difference than the next three miles, and those three miles much more than the next three hundred, was a truth difficult to grasp without experience, and its neglect caused bad feeling, and sometimes actually bad management, that might have been avoided.



for a great deal of experience. Yet while men who years before the war had retired from leading their companies or squadrons came back to command battalions or even brigades, the unprofessional soldier had rarely attained even the lesser of these heights by the end of the war, and had very rarely gone farther, never much farther.

Another side of the same deficiency was the rarity among higher officers; and indeed among staff officers of all ranks, of experience of the front line. That the first three hundred yards from the foremost

A difference in the British and French routine of trench-fighting was perhaps not unconnected with this last consideration. The French plan was to avoid every danger from which no specific advantage was to be expected, and not without very definite reason to annoy an enemy who was himself temporarily inoffensive. The British company officer, on the contrary, was exhorted to be continually offensive. The enemy trenches were never to be allowed to be comfortable, and were to be raided as often as possible : this was well enough, but the effect was

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reciprocal and tended to be equal. Perhaps it was worth while: raids which brought back information of enemy dispositions were certainly worth while, and the insistence on making trench routine as active as possible may probably have disturbed German more than British nerves. But a good deal

was much less quiet than a quiet time anywhere else.

There was a similar phenomenon in the aerial warfare. Any British reader who chooses may believe that the British aviators were braver than the German or the French, but it is a claim (true or false)



RICHTHOFEN, THE GERMAN AIRMAN, CONGRATULATED BY LUDENDORFF

With the Fokker machine superiority in the air was gained for a time by the Germans. Richthofen's aeroplane is shown in the background.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

of the talk about encouraging the offensive spirit assumed that the soldier's danger, like the fisherman's or the miner's, was something to which men could be inured; whereas, indeed, most men were really comforted at the end of the first day or the first week, but after that became more and more conscious of their danger and afraid that they might flinch from it. In any case it is well to remember that a quiet time in the trenches held by the British against the Germans

that cannot be substantiated and that had better not be made. What is fairly clear is that they did more fighting. The German principle was not to fight unless the combat promised a good result; the British, to go where fighting was likely, and to fight when fighting was possible. Both principles are good: where so much depends on dash and confidence the British seems the better. Certainly it was applied with a gallantry which has never been excelled, and which



SCENE IN A GERMAN TRENCH ON THE SOMME



IN A BRITISH FRONT-LINE TRENCH AT OVILLERS
From Crown Copyright Photographs in the Imperial War Museum.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



HAULING A LEWIS GUN CARRIAGE THROUGH THE MUD ON THE FRICOURT-BRAY ROAD,
AUGUST 7, 1916

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

came near enough to perfection to make hyperbole difficult. It is entitled to be credited with a share of the glories of the Royal Air Force; and with that justification its champions may afford to confess that it had some drawbacks, that it involved some useless sacrifice of lives, and that it was sometimes intolerably parodied, as when a highly placed officer announced to a parade of pilots and observers (each of whom was conscious that he could hardly expect to survive the war) that he could always tell which was the best squadron in his command, it was the one whose casualty list for the last week was the longest.

So far only officers have been mentioned, for the men who flew were almost all commissioned (and, by the by, that is one reason why they were more aggressive than the Germans, with whom a non-commissioned pilot would sometimes refuse battle, to the rage of the observer who was his commanding officer). In short, it seems fair to say of the British officers that up to field rank

they were as good as any: above that, if the average was not so good as in the French or in the German army, that was in the nature of things: if at the very top we did not produce a Foch or a Ludendorff, two Fochs on one side might have been a nuisance, and even one Ludendorff not altogether convenient: at least the man we did produce had the indispensable qualification—he was liked and, especially, trusted. Modern armies can know little, but they feel much, about their leaders: it was important that Sir Douglas Haig inspired confidence.

Perhaps all this is not worth saying: of the men it is even more difficult to speak. There were many more of them, and they were much less homogeneous. The records that remain are misleading: those that are official refer only to the exceptional, and the others are generally sentimental when they are not altogether imagined. Yet in all the history of the British people there is nothing which it would be more valuable to know than what the men who fought in the ranks

THE MEN OF THE SOMME

at the Somme were like. One thing that is capable of clear proof is that they were extraordinarily well-behaved: not merely in a military sense, that they stood the test of battle, though they did that nobly, for that would not suffice to distinguish them from the French or the Germans: but also that they were singularly little prone to the crimes that beset the fighting-man—looting, drunkenness, rape, sodomy, desertion. Not that single men (or even married men) in billets or huts grew into plaster saints, but that their respect for the corporation to which they belonged was high, and that the kindliness which was their commonest quality made almost all of them almost all the time incapable of crimes of violence. A good deal, too, of their freedom from passionate extravagances was due to their lack of solemnity, their refusal to take themselves very seriously; and it was this scepticism about themselves, combined with a very deep confidence in each other, which enabled them to sing those songs which to the Germans seemed evidence

of depressed *moral* and which were even proscribed as ribald by some British officers. Perhaps the most popular of these was the one whose chorus (with some bowdlerization in the last lines) ran as follows:

I don't want to be a soldier,
I don't want to go to war;
I'd rather stay at home,
And round the streets I'd roam,
And live upon the earnings of a lady typist:
I don't want a bayonet in my stomach,
I don't want my eyeballs shot away:
I'd rather stay in England,
In dear old beery England,
And have a different sweetheart every day.

Hardly less frequently heard were these more collectively depreciatory lines:

We are Fred Karno's army,
The rag-time ———*,
We cannot drill, we cannot shoot,
What blasted fools we are!
And when we get to Berlin
The Kaiser he will shout
Hoch, hoch! mein Gott,
What a blasted rotten lot
Are the rag-time ———*.

* Name of the corps concerned.



BRITISH TROOPS MOVING UP IN SUPPORT AT GINCHY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1916

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

There were many more songs like these, and among them all the second one quoted, with its reference to Berlin, is almost unique in its very ambiguous hint at triumph. There can have been few other occasions when a whole army fought a long, doubtful, and finally victorious war in a spirit of irony.

for the business in hand. Therefore it is the more to be wished that the characteristics of the men of the Somme could be fixed for remembrance: it is hoped that the indications here given are true so far as they go. For their technical competence, it would have been strange if it had equalled that of the



MOTOR TRANSPORT IN THE SOMME BATTLE

An Irish brigade going back for a rest after the capture of Guillemont, September, 1916.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

The Somme was the classic ground of Britain under arms: the old army has many classic grounds, of which Ypres is not the least: the new, in its full development, first fought on the Somme; and after the Somme, it was no longer quite what it had been—for many of the survivors what began as an adventure not without glory, had become a task hard to be borne, and among the recruits, commissioned and non-commissioned, there were many neither morally nor physically so well fitted as their predecessors

regular army: at least it fell short of that standard by very much less than had been predicted, and, all question of the higher command left aside, compared not unfavourably with its allies and rivals. Perhaps it would be rash to compare the British field artillery with the French, but then we may not unreasonably believe that our aviation service was no less pre-eminent.

This army so characterized was well supplied. It had not indeed the almost infinite store of guns and shells which it was to have:

PROBLEM OF THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

but it had at last enough. Moreover, its equipment was excellent in kind as well as in amount : the new instruments of warfare were no longer enemy assets—heavy guns, barbed wire, machine guns, gas, mortars, bombs : and beyond that, even, it was from the British side that the still newer devices were to come—most notably the tanks, a weapon of purely British invention, which some suppose might with proper exploitation have been decisive, and which certainly was at least a serious reinforcement to the allied side.

The Spirit of the People

Most valuable resource of all, the army still had behind it a people united and cheerful in the pursuit of victory. If the easy triumph which some had expected at the beginning was no longer thought of, yet in the middle of 1916 there was on the whole more union and more cheerfulness than in much of the earlier, or any of the later, part of the war. There are reservations to be made, it is true : the men who believed that all war was wrong or that this war was wrong had received certain reinforcements : there were those who found war an intolerable interference with their normal interests ; those who found it so difficult to apportion moral blame between the two sides that they preferred to call it six of one and half a dozen of the other, and accordingly hoped for peace without victory ; there were those who thought that victory was impossible and that therefore peace of some sort should be made at once ; there were those who found in the economic and especially in the constitutional effects of war government reason enough why war should be stopped. All these categories overlapped a good deal, and even together they were not very numerous : but they were vocal, and those of them who were not intelligent were at least intellectual, and had the prestige which can always be had in Britain by anyone who proclaims loudly enough his own moral and mental superiority.

Moreover, they were given a platform and something of a justification by the conscience clause of the Military Service Acts and by the existence of real inconveniences and in-

justices under those acts and the Defence of the Realm Acts. The conscience clause enlisted the support of nonconformity, and objectors earned the glory reserved for individualists whose free will is anti-national. The problem of the conscientious objector was infinitely complicated by the want of a definition of conscience : if exemption had been reserved for members of religious communities whose dogmas forbade all fighting, it would have had some meaning ; as it was, anyone might claim release from the act so long as he asserted very emphatically that he disliked it very much. In such circumstances it was quite inevitable that there should be some injustice (for clearly not everyone who asked for exemption could be given it), and that on both sides hatred and contempt should multiply.

War-Time Restrictions

The Defence of the Realm Acts were not free from similar disadvantages. Reports likely to cause disaffection or interfere with the success of His Majesty's forces or allies, or to prejudice his relations with foreign powers, might be held to include almost anything disagreeable to authority, and merely to have materials for such reports in possession was a crime : meetings might be forbidden if they were likely to cause grave disorder : persons whose liberty was considered to threaten the success of the war might be interned, though internees not of enemy origin had a right of appeal to an advisory committee. Punishment up to imprisonment for six months or a fine of £100 might be inflicted without trial by jury. These things were undeniably interferences with traditional British freedom : most people thought that the amount of injustice which they involved was small, inconsiderable in relation to their advantages : yet some thought the losses so important that anything which caused them, a war however national, must be wholly evil and ought to be stopped : some even believed, or affected to believe, that the war was a mere excuse for making infringements on liberty which were intended to be permanent. It was curious that the people who in other times had been most insistent on the sovereignty of a majority

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A TYPICAL SECTION OF THE SOMME BATTLEFIELD

Seaforth Highlanders holding a front-line trench near Martinpuich, August 25, 1916.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

were in this connexion most impatient of national dictation, and, for instance, most bitterly resented the employment of force against men who asserted their outlawry from the State and disinterest in the nation, though they were tolerant enough of the much more far-reaching interferences with the habits, the convivial habits for example, of those whose consciences allowed them to offer their blood and toil to the service of the community.

But the objectors and the eccentrics and the defeatists were never more than a very small minority, and at the time of the Somme they were rather fewer and much less obstreperous than they afterwards became. The great majority was still at one : on the whole it was prosperous, food was expensive but there was enough of it, and fewer people than in peace time found it difficult to obtain : there was plenty of hope : there was, all considered, very little hatred of the Germans, though men in authority sometimes seemed to wish there were more, and propa-

gandists were not always just in their allegations : yet there was plenty of conviction that the Germans had behaved with cruelty and indecency, and for that reason deserved the defeat which on other grounds it was necessary they should suffer : perhaps the most characteristic element in this conviction was the judicial murder (for so it was regarded) of Miss Cavell, and, a little later than the middle of 1916, that of Captain Fryatt ; in more minds than official opinion supposed, the most notable words of the war were the last words of Miss Cavell—"They have all been very kind to me. But this I would say, standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone" (words which those who were responsible for Miss Cavell's memorial found incompatible, it appears, with the spirit of its design). Conscription had not as yet affected the quality of the soldiers ; it had become something like matter of course at home, and with

BAD BEGINNING OF THE SOMME BATTLE

the reduction of its pressure on skilled men its main offence was mitigated. The army of the Somme was well backed.

It might have mourned, if it had had time for mourning, Lord Kitchener. It received in his stead a civilian head to whom it already owed much and was to owe more: on July 6th it was announced that Mr. Lloyd George had been appointed secretary of State for war.

As minister of munitions, Mr. Lloyd George had already been intimately connected with the army, and to the army's advantage: when every allowance has been made for what had been done before his time, for what he himself did ill, and for what good in his ministry was not due to him, it still remains true that to him a great debt of gratitude is due. His doubling, even against war office opposition, of orders for guns; the considerable, if partial, success of his emotional appeal to the Clyde workers in 1915; his forcing gun-makers to disclose their designs to other firms—these were great specific

services, besides his general service of bringing his immense energy and prestige to the expansion of munition supply. His great service as war secretary was to be of the same sort—the appointment of Sir Eric Geddes as director of communications in France. It is not necessary to believe that there was no soldier so intelligent or so resourceful as Sir Eric; but certainly Sir Eric revolutionized railway communications in the British sphere in France, one method being to import large stretches of track from Canada and India: no military man was in a position to get such things done.

Perhaps enough has been said to indicate the conditions in which the British army began its great effort on the Somme: no attempt will be made to trace its course, but something must be said of its results, at least of the more immediate and obvious of them.

The battle began badly: throughout its course, indeed, the British never did so badly as on the first day. It went on better,



THE DESOLATION OF THE SOMME, 1916

Ruins of the village of Fricourt.

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and ground was gained to an extent which was infinitesimal in comparison with the casualties, but considerable as such things went on the western front. It was soon proved that our superiority was not yet enough for us reasonably to hope for a great break-through, and in particular that we were still short of heavy guns and that it



SIR ERIC GEDDES

From a Photograph by Keturah Collings.

was impossible to over-estimate the stock of shells that could be used. Very early the government came to these conclusions, and by the middle of November, when the battle came to an end, they were obvious enough. Nor had our losses been small: at the end of September they had exceeded a quarter of a million, out of which a high authority reckoned that 50,000 were due to the mistakes of July 1.³ On the other hand, the battle had relieved Verdun, and kept the German army most exhaustingly occupied. Haig might fairly write: "The enemy's power has not yet been broken, nor is it yet possible to form an estimate of the time

the war may last before the objects for which the Allies are fighting are attained. But the Somme battle has placed beyond doubt the ability of the Allies to gain those objects. The German army is the mainstay of the Central Powers, and a full half of that army . . . suffered defeat on the Somme this year." It was a reasonable boast, but it set forth a gloomy prospect. Was the only way to go on, for no one could say how long, flinging valiant flesh into the furnace? Could not intellect discover any tactics less costly than frontal attack after frontal attack? Must almost all the youth of Britain die to slay quite all the youth of Germany?

Such questionings were perhaps the main element in the British people's growing discontent with its government towards the end of 1916: but there were others. In the late summer German submarines began again to be a serious menace: the promise made to President Wilson after the *Sussex* case was ignored whenever it seemed worth while, and, by this means and the utilization of submarines much larger than had been available before, the Germans were in a fair way to reach their object of so impeding ocean traffic as to complicate fatally France and Britain's problem of supply. It was clearly urgent that something should be done—the building of more ships, the better use of existing tonnage, the arming of merchantmen, the development of new tactics, the employment of new anti-submarine devices. There was a growing feeling, fostered by a vigorous newspaper agitation, that these matters were not receiving the best possible attention: that feeling was strengthened also by the fact of two German destroyer raids (though neither of them was very effective) in the Straits of Dover, and by the belief that in other matters also there was an ineffectiveness like that complained of in connexion with shipping: in the cognate matters, for instance, of food control and of national thrift. Food prices were approaching double the figures that ruled before the war: waste of food, or indeed of anything else, was a grave national danger, especially in the minds of those who knew how very near we were getting to the end

THE RUMANIAN DEBACLE

of our national tether. These were subjects of which the government had talked much, but it had done nothing else except to advertise, very expensively, the necessity of thrift, in accordance with the excessive confidence in the power of propaganda which was one of the characteristic evils of the time.

Then there was the doubt whether our man-power was being used to the best advantage, and the more immediately urgent problem of our resources in aviation material. The navy and the army were competing, to the loss of both, for men and machines, and the Air Board had proved quite inadequate to adjust their claims and supply their deficiencies. All these things together were a heavy load for a government to bear: the one success to set on the other side was the definitive defeat of the zeppelins: but this was not enough, and in its turn was vastly overweighted by the allied disasters in the Balkans.

At the end of August, Rumania entered the war on the side of the Allies: this was a reinforcement for which they had long been working, and which now they obtained in return for a promise of parts of the Bukovina and of Transylvania. It meant an addition of half a million men and revived hopes that after all the war might be finished, or at least shortened, in the East. It had also less material advantages, characteristically exaggerated by the *Daily News*, for instance, when it said "it is not, of course, the military meaning which gives it importance—it means that, in the judgment of the most astute and interested of neutral powers, Germany's doom is sealed."⁴ Lastly, Rumania's entry—along with the allied successes on the Somme, at Verdun, in the Carpathians, and at Gorizia—was, no doubt, partly responsible for Mr. Lloyd George's utterance on September 29th, when he told the world, and especially President Wilson, that Britain would "tolerate no intervention now: the fight must be to a finish, to a knock-out."

But Rumanian aid was not to save us: within three months of firing the first shot her forces were everywhere in retreat, and at the beginning of December it was

clear that she was conquered, that the only importance left to her was as an additional storehouse for the Central Powers. It was more improbable than ever that the Balkan peninsula could be made into an asset for the Allies.

Before the Rumanian collapse had produced its full effect of disillusion in Britain, the forces were already in motion which were



A TYPICAL LANDSCAPE ON THE SOMME, 1916
Captured German front-line trench at Ovillers.

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to destroy Mr. Asquith's government. The importance of the newspapers among those forces can easily be exaggerated: so long as the malcontents were the *Daily Mail*, *The Times*, and the *Morning Post*, they could be resisted; but by now there was hardly a paper which was content. Even so they were not omnipotent: the press cannot much and suddenly alter the views of the public, as the public was relieved to learn when the *Daily Mail* tried to impose upon it an unfamiliar hat. Nor was the press unanimous: all the papers were urging the government but not all in the same direction: the most

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urgent and violent, however, were on the same side—they wanted Mr. Asquith to go, and they wanted in his place somebody, anybody, but the more energetic and enterprising the better. They affected to believe, and events seem to have proved, that public opinion in this regard was the same as theirs.

It was the fashion to declare that the

raison d'être was the winning of the war could not, for all its expenditure of blood and treasure, do more than force a stalemate, parliamentary opposition became a dreadful danger.

The crisis was precipitated by an incident trivial in itself.⁵ On November 8th a motion in the House of Commons that enemy properties in Crown colonies and protectorates



WAR'S DEVASTATION ON THE SOMME, 1916

The road to Mametz Wood. A portion of the remnants of the wood is visible on the left.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

coalition had robbed the House of Commons of its last remnant of authority over government. This was not altogether false, but it was not quite true. The weakness of the House of Commons was the absence of a regular opposition which could supply an alternative government. During 1916 Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Churchill had been more and more appearing as the leaders of an embryonic opposition. It had not got much beyond that stage, and was not considerable so long as the government had no other attacks to fear: but now that it was beginning to appear that the government whose

should be sold only to British subjects was pressed by Sir Edward Carson and supported by 65 Unionists: the motion affected no vital point of policy, and it was beaten: but it showed that there was a very considerable section of the Unionist party which might assist Sir Edward Carson in active opposition unless some change were made in the government.

Other forces were moving in the same direction. The war committee had not served its purpose ideally, nor even relatively well, since it was larger and less homogeneous than its predecessor. So long ago as

GOVERNMENT DISSENSIONS

July Mr. Lloyd George had been ridiculing it in private as "the Duma." One suggested reform, of Mr. Bonar Law's authorship, was to reduce it to himself, Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. Asquith: this was vetoed by Mr. Asquith. Various other schemes were proposed and rejected: the minimum requirements were difficult to reconcile with each other—something which might be tolerable

by Sir Max Aitken. This extremely active personage had arrived, some dozen years earlier, in England from Canada with a fortune that was sufficient, though not remarkable by the standards of Lombard Street or even of Fleet Street, and with a reputation that made him remarkable in either thoroughfare, or anywhere else. He became a member of parliament, entered the intimacy of Mr.



MACKENSEN'S ENTRY INTO BUKAREST AFTER THE RUMANIAN DEFEAT

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to Mr. Asquith, but which yet promised vigour enough for Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Edward Carson, would command the allegiance of Mr. Bonar Law and a majority in the House of Commons, and (if possible) the benediction of Lord Northcliffe. There was complication, too, in the drifting of Mr. George farther away from Mr. Law than is convenient between partners in statesmanship, and nearer to Sir Edward than is usual between the second man in a cabinet and the leader of opposition. Moreover, Mr. George had not been the war secretary of Lord Northcliffe's dreams, and there also some reconciliation was required.

The blessed rôle of peacemaker was filled

Law, increased his fortune, acquired control of the *Daily Express*, and was gazetted baronet on the day of the news of Jutland. By December, 1916, he was convinced of the immediate urgency of providing Mr. Asquith with a successor. It could be no one but Mr. Lloyd George, who was popular, energetic, and adaptable; the man who had made munitions, championed conscription, warned the general staff of what was to happen in Rumania, declared the necessity of the knock-out blow. It was round him that the other pieces of the puzzle must be fitted.

It was done: the government could more easily be reconstructed if Mr. Asquith were

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left out; that simplification of the problem was accepted. First, Mr. Bonar Law was reconciled to Sir Edward Carson: then Sir Max induced the two of them into counsel with Mr. Lloyd George: lastly, he persuaded Mr. George that Lord Northcliffe was an ally well worth the swallowing of some resentment, and he too was admitted into

and seemed equally intractable on the personal issues—the inclusion of Sir Edward Carson and the removal of Mr. Balfour.

The effect seems to have been that Mr. Lloyd George resolved on resignation: that intention was freely attributed to him on December 2nd and 3rd, not least definitely by newspapers likely to be especially well



SIGNING THE TREATY OF BUKAREST

Seated from the right are seen the Turkish minister, Baron Burian, von Kühlmann, Radislov, the Rumanian representative, and the Bulgarian minister.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

confidence. So the forces were gathered: on December 1st the attack was launched.

The first offensive (and it is difficult to doubt that it was intended to be offensive) was Mr. Lloyd George's proposal to Mr. Asquith of a war committee of three, excluding the prime minister, making decisions which should be final, except when the prime minister appealed against them to the whole cabinet. Mr. Asquith agreed that some immediate change was necessary, but insisted that in any case the prime minister must be chairman of the war committee,

informed. On the 3rd the Unionist ministers authorized Mr. Bonar Law to offer their resignations to the prime minister in order to facilitate the reconstruction to which, they felt, he was by that time compelled. Apparently they were at this stage inclined to support Mr. Asquith rather than Mr. Lloyd George, and it is said that they passed a resolution strongly disapproving the latter's relations with the press: this resolution, if it existed, failed to reach Mr. Asquith, whose hands it would have strengthened. However, on the same day a compromise was

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT

reached between the prime minister, Mr. Bonar Law, and Mr. Lloyd George: there was to be a committee of five, of which Mr. Asquith, though not a regular member, was to be chairman whenever he cared to attend: its personal composition was agreed on (with the important exception of the Balfour-Carson question), and the passing of the crisis seemed to Mr. Asquith certain enough to justify him in informing the press that evening that the government was in process of reconstruction.

Resignation of Mr. Asquith

But Mr. Asquith's communication to the press was not the only one. *The Times* for December 4th published a leading article describing the negotiations of the three previous days, and alleging that the outcome of them was to be a small supreme council from which the prime minister was to be excluded, but to which Sir Edward Carson was to be admitted as "an essential part of Mr. Lloyd George's scheme." This was hardly a fair, but it was not an uninformed, account of what had been settled. There were only three people who could have supplied the information: it was not conceivable that either Mr. Asquith or Mr. Law had done so. Mr. Asquith at once wrote to Mr. Lloyd George complaining of the misrepresentation of the *Times* article, emphasizing the provisional nature of the previous day's suggestions, and insisting that unless the impression were corrected that he was being relegated to the position of an irresponsible spectator of the war he could not possibly go on. Mr. Lloyd George replied that he had not seen the article, that he could not restrain or even influence Lord Northcliffe, and that he accepted the prime minister's summary of the suggested arrangement, "—subject, of course, to personnel." Mr. Asquith took up the challenge: he answered that on consideration he was resolved that the prime minister must remain permanent president of the war committee, that Mr. Balfour must remain, and that Sir Edward Carson had not the qualifications for admission. Next morning he received Mr. Lloyd George's letter of resignation.

It was a letter of resignation, but it was

also something more, it was an argument in justification of Mr. Lloyd George, based on two assertions, that for the last two years there had been "delay, hesitation, lack of forethought and vision," against which he had vainly protested (the last straw being the Rumanian disaster), and that in the negotiations of the last three days the prime minister had twice withdrawn after having concurred: it contained also a request, which Mr. Asquith did not grant, that the whole controversy might be made public. In a second letter (still on December 5th), again deprecating publication, Mr. Asquith informed Mr. Lloyd George that he had tendered his resignation.

The rest of the story may be quickly told. Mr. Bonar Law having proved unable to form a ministry, on December 6th Mr. Lloyd George undertook the task. The Labour party came in, in return for a few offices, and certain rather indefinite promises about shipping and mines: most of the Liberals were willing to give what help they could: there was more doubt about the Unionists, but it was removed when Mr. Law persuaded Mr. Balfour to stay on. On December 11th the new government was announced: the war cabinet consisted of Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Curzon, Lord Milner, Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Bonar Law; none of these gentlemen had any executive office except the last, who was chancellor of the exchequer, and whose attendance was not expected to be regular: the chief changes otherwise were that Mr. Balfour went to the foreign office instead of Sir Edward Grey, and that his place at the admiralty was taken by Sir Edward Carson.

Importance of the New Government

So much detail about an incident whose background makes it seem small or even petty may require some justification. That incident gave Great Britain a government which lasted nearly six years, and which was in power when the war was won, when the peace was signed, and when the new era was inaugurated; it was a government, then, of quite extraordinary importance to Britain and to the world. Also the mere method by which it was formed was in itself important, because it was unprecedented. There

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was no general election, and no overt and certain changes in the wishes of the House of Commons. There was one minister who overshadowed the prime minister and even the cabinet, who was convinced of the necessity of a change, and who, with the assistance of an opposition leader and of two newspaper magnates, brought it about. The object no doubt was good, the strengthening of the country and the winning of the war: the methods had the charm of novelty and success, and perhaps needed no other recommendation. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that half a dozen men by a complicated intrigue had substituted one government for another: they could do it only because they were allowed to do it. At the time it was commonly supposed

among the knowing that Mr. Asquith was necessary, that his removal would alarm and divide public opinion, that Mr. Lloyd George could not last. These suppositions were false. In the event the disappearance of Mr. Asquith was welcomed with a general sigh of relief. This may have been unfair to Mr. Asquith, and on the other hand his supplanter may have been excessively rewarded for not the most admirable of his qualities. But the relief was real enough, and after all it was not so very odd if the government of the last two years vanished unregretted. Perhaps it is a little excessive to assert that Mr. Lloyd George succeeded Mr. Asquith because the people wished it, but at least it is clear enough that the people did wish it.



A TANK IN ACTION

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THE BLOCKADE IN PRACTICE

An armed merchantman of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron boarding neutrals.

From a Drawing by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BLOCKADE—AMERICA—RUSSIA

IN these pages, diplomacy has been neglected ever since it was interrupted by the declaration of war; the interruption was short and, indeed, only partial, and though the neglect may at first be defended on the plea of preoccupation, yet with the approach of 1917 such a plea loses its validity, for in that year the two events which most profoundly affected the British people were both diplomatic—the American declaration of war, and the Russian armistice. The year 1917, not only for the British people but for the world, is the date of these two events and of one other—the German attempt to starve Great Britain. Even the war, in spite of great campaigns, Cambrai, Caporetto, Palestine, was pushed for a time into the background.

In any belligerent country the great mass of the people has only one war-aim, and that is victory; so that in the heat of conflict it is easy to forget that the mere chance of

victory would not have induced any state to give up the blessings of peace, but that the risks of war are being run and victory is being sought for the sake of the fruits which it is hoped to gather from it. The British people had begun the war with a variety of motives: some conceived themselves to be resisting an aggression which if it did not threaten them directly threatened them no less vitally; some were moved by sympathy for France; some, no doubt, by the hope of striking a blow at a commercial rival: on the whole it is probably true (with something as near completeness as is possible in such matters) that the violation of Belgian neutrality brought the British Empire unanimous into the war, and that it came in with no desire for acquisition. But it was clear from the first that its allies did intend to increase their territorial possessions.

Britain's war-aims, as they were officially

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stated, and no doubt as they existed in the minds of her statesmen, were at first extremely vague, though not necessarily the less valid for that. "We shall never sheathe the sword, which we have not lightly drawn" (said Mr. Asquith on November 9, 1914), "until Belgium recovers in full measure all and more than all that she has sacrificed, until France is adequately secured against the menace of aggression, until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed upon an unassailable foundation, and until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed." There could be no doubt that Serbia should be bracketed with Belgium, and in effect the omission was rectified a little later: neither was it doubtful that "adequate security" for France would have to include Alsace and Lorraine; and this too was made public and specific by M. Viviani's declaration on December 22—"France will lay down arms only . . . when the provinces torn from her have been rejoined to her for ever." Russian statesmen promised autonomy to a Poland which should include provinces formerly subject to Austrian and German sovereignty. Italy, unlike the other allies, avowedly entered the war with motives of "sacred egoism," and did not conceal that she had large claims not only on irredentist but also on strategic grounds. These claims and those of Russia especially, and in a less degree those of France and Britain, as embodied in a series of secret treaties, were to cause some embarrassment to allied diplomacy when in November, 1917, they were published by the Bolsheviks, but for the present they may be left, with as little definition as they publicly received until that date.

The Diplomatic Struggle

In the first half of the war the diplomacy of the Entente had been much superior to that of the German alliance: leaving aside the question whether the Germans with a little more astuteness might not have avoided or at least postponed British hostility, the two great fields for diplomacy were Italy and the Balkans. In Italy the Entente was completely successful: in nine months,

from being a peace-time ally of the Central Empires she had become a war-time ally of their enemies: it was a great triumph, though there was a big price to pay for it. In the Balkans neither side had any such absolute success: the Central Powers won the first round when Turkey joined them, the second when Bulgaria followed suit: nor, for all the assistance of Venizelos, could the Entente make much of a make-weight of Greece, nor, as has been seen, of Rumania.

But there was one alliance still to be won which would bring to either side more than all the reinforcement it could have received from Italy and the whole Balkan peninsula; this was the alliance of the United States. Both sides had sacrificed much and incurred much blame at home to avoid American hostility: now one side was to make up its mind that continued sacrifice was unremunerative, and the other was to reap the reward.

America and the Submarine Warfare

Already once the German government had come very near to driving the United States into the ranks of its enemies. There was much surprise and indignation among the Allies, and some even in America, when the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May, 1915, quite failed of that effect, but the continued use of submarines against merchantmen, in ruthless violation of law and humanity, led to President Wilson's threat on April 18, 1916, to sever diplomatic relations. The Germans gave way, neither very gracefully nor quite unreservedly, on May 4, but at the end of the month President Wilson, though still professing American disinterestedness from the causes and objects of the war, was obviously facing the possibility of intervention: he was "ready to fight for our rights when those rights are coincident with the rights of man and humanity," and though he would never consent to an entangling alliance, he would "gladly assent to a disentangling alliance—an alliance which would disentangle the peoples of the world from these combinations in which they seek their own separate and private interests, and unite the people of

PRESIDENT WILSON'S PACIFICATORY GESTURE

the world to preserve the peace of the world upon a basis of common right and justice."

From that time until February of the next year the president was bent on keeping his country out of the war, and also, partly as the best means of attaining that object and partly in the interests of the universe, on using his neutrality to bring the war to an end. Till almost the close of the year he had no opportunity of doing much to further the second half of this plan, although it was known that the German government (no doubt considering any improvement in its military position unlikely) desired negotiations to be begun. If they were not to be begun, then the strongest weapon remaining in Germany's hands imperfectly exploited was the submarine, and on October 9 the Kaiser informed the president that unless there were a prompt move in the direction of peace his government would be forced to regain the freedom of action which it had reserved to itself in the note of May 4.¹ The president, aware that any proffer of mediation would be unacceptable to the British government, and waiting till his position was strengthened by re-election on November 19, moved slowly: so slowly, indeed, that he had not perceptibly moved at all when, on December 12, Germany herself (in a document which reached the British Foreign Office on December 18) proposed the calling of a peace conference.²

Germany's Call for Peace

Mr. Wilson was not pleased at this disturbance of his plans, and indeed the effect of the German action was not at all to forward the interests of peace: it was vain for Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg to protest that his country and her allies had taken up arms in defence of their existence and freedom, that they were unconquerable, but that in spite of this double armoury of force and rectitude they were resolved to respect the rights of others and anxious to stop the effusion of blood. The British people remained unconvinced that the Central Powers had been the innocent victims of aggression, and, most especially, unwilling to admit that they were victorious or even that

they were unconquerable: nor was any considerable section of it inclined to believe that the propositions which Germany would bring forward "would be such as to serve as a basis for the restoration of a lasting peace."

In Britain, as in other allied countries, it was only the comparatively few persons dominated by distrust of their own government, or tenderness for the German, or excessive horror of war, who doubted that the chancellor's protestations were false or assumed that the negotiations which he proposed might tolerably end the war. The rest believed that their enemies wished to stop fighting only because they no longer thought it remunerative to go on and that the peace terms which they would propose would be quite unacceptable. Information published after the war (and especially the memoirs of Ludendorff) has proved them right. Germany was to be "secured" both on the east and on the west by territorial "rectifications" and by economic and other "guarantees." On any such basis there could be no hope of agreement, quite apart from the more general question of the desirability of peace without victory.

President Wilson's Note

The chief immediate results of the German note were to deepen the faith of those Germans who most implicitly trusted their government, and to make the Entente, authorities and peoples alike, more suspicious than they otherwise would have been of President Wilson's pacificatory gesture. That that gesture was long premeditated the governments, the British government at least, knew, but the peoples could hardly be persuaded.

The president's note was addressed, on December 18, in identical terms to all the belligerent states. It disavowed any intention of offering mediation, but suggested that it would be a long step towards peace if both sides would define the objects which they had in view: it pointed out that those objects, in so far as they had been declared, were "virtually the same"—the rights of weak peoples and small states, security for all, a League of Nations instead of a balance of power.

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This note was received in England with consternation: it was dreadful to think that the government of the greatest neutral power, the head of the most nearly related nation, after over two years of war, when at last brought to express an interest in the causes and objects of the conflict, judged that there was nothing to choose between Britain and Germany in these respects. It

their cause in America. The note was not published in England till the newspapers had been induced to comment on it in none but the most cautious terms, and especially to abstain from any reflection on Mr. Wilson's sincerity: equal pains were taken to ensure that the reports cabled to America of the note's reception in England should be of the most anodyne nature.



THE KAISER, LUDENDORFF, AND HINDENBURG

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is true that the words of the note did not necessarily require that interpretation: it might be rather that the president was moved merely by the desire to preserve an appearance of scrupulous impartiality or even that he believed (what proved to be the fact) that the form of his request would advantage the Entente by forcing Germany to return much the less plausible answer. But it was not to be expected that the British people, harassed and irritated, should take this view: most of its leaders, even, inclined to the less favourable view, but they made every effort lest the prevalence of that view should still further prejudice

For these precautions there were the most urgent reasons: victory might be had without American co-operation: it would be much more certain and much more swift with it: without at least the benevolent neutrality of the United States defeat might be averted, but hardly. By this time the British government if not the British people knew that it was facing financial collapse: perhaps that disaster could have been avoided without American help, but no one could have said how it was to be done: with the alliance of the United States the problem would be immensely simplified.



PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON

From a Photograph by Underwood.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

The German reply was made on Christmas Day: it received the president's "high-minded suggestion . . . in the friendly spirit in which it is expressed": it desired, "in the sense of the proposal made on December 12 . . . an immediate meeting of delegates of the belligerent states at some neutral place": it expressed pleasure at the prospect of collaborating, after the end of the present struggle, with the United States in the prevention of future wars: of the terms which the Central Powers would accept it said nothing at all.

The Allied Reply to Wilson

On December 30 the Allies replied to Germany, denouncing her allegations of their responsibility for war and of her own victory, asserting that the object of her overtures was to sow dissension among them, to stiffen the opinion of her own people, and to justify new outrages by land and sea, and declaring that "no peace is possible so long as they have not secured reparation of violated rights and liberties, recognition of the principle of nationalities and of the free existence of small states."

It was precisely a further definition of these last phrases that President Wilson was asking for: the answer was given on January 10. The Allies declared themselves cordially in favour "of creating a league of the nations to ensure peace and justice throughout the world," but they judged any such arrangements dependent on a satisfactory settlement of the present conflict, and such a settlement not yet possible: they recognized American goodwill but protested "in the clearest way against the establishment . . . of a likeness between the two belligerent groups," and would not believe that the president had intended to assert the existence of any such likeness: their war aims would "only be set forth in detail, with all the compensations and equitable indemnities for harm suffered, at the moment of negotiation. But the civilized world knows that they imply, necessarily and first of all, the restoration of Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro, with the compensations due to them; the evacuation of the invaded territories in France,

in Russia, in Rumania, with just reparation; the reorganization of Europe, guaranteed by a stable régime and based at once on respect for nationalities and on the right to full security and liberty of economic development possessed by all peoples, small and great, and at the same time upon territorial conventions, and international settlements such as to guarantee land and sea frontiers against unjustified attack; the restoration of provinces formerly torn from the Allies by force or against the wish of their inhabitants; the liberation of the Italians, as also of the Slavs, Rumanes, and Czecho-Slovaks, from foreign domination; the setting free of the populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks; and the turning out of Europe of the Ottoman Empire as decidedly foreign to Western civilization." Lastly, there was to be a re-united autonomous Poland under the suzerainty of the Tsar.

Why America Came into the War

The next stage in these momentous negotiations was the speech in which Mr. Wilson recounted their history to the senate: but before that speech was delivered events had taken place by which circumstances were profoundly modified. The German military authorities did not believe that any efforts of theirs could improve their situation: the naval authorities had no longer any hopes of battles on the water but thought that if they were given a free hand in the use of submarines they might yet have the glory if not of beating at least of dragging Britain to her knees: for many months some of them, supported by the generals, had urged this course: at last they were successful, and on January 9 their decision was approved by the Kaiser. It has been asserted that this decision was discovered by the interception, on January 16th, of a message to Bernstorff, ambassador at Washington³: on the 31st it was publicly proclaimed by the German government.

This was the decision which brought the United States into the war; but, no doubt before he knew of the decision, the president gave one more shock to the Entente peoples. In his last large pronouncement

WILSON'S DECLARATION OF AMERICA'S PRINCIPLES

to the world from a position of neutrality, Mr. Wilson made the fullest use of the superiority which that position conferred. It was on January 22 that he disclosed to the senate, as he said, the thought and purpose that had been taking form in his mind. All parties were agreed that it was "necessary to lay afresh and upon a new plan the foundations of peace": the United States would have no voice in fixing the terms of peace, but they must take their share in guaranteeing its permanence and keeping the future safe from war, and if that were to be so they must be satisfied that its elements were consistent with their political faith and practical convictions: "there must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power": there "must be a peace without victory," because "only a peace between equals can last": there must be an equality of rights: "no peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognize and accept the principle that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed: . . . the paths of the sea must in law and fact be free": the president believed that he was saying what the people of the United States would wish him to say, and hoped and believed that he was "in effect speaking for liberals and friends of humanity in every nation": indeed, he "would fain believe" that he was "speaking for the silent mass of mankind everywhere. . . . These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no other. And yet they are the principles and policies of forward-looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind, and must prevail."

Effect of Wilson's Declaration

This speech had been telegraphed to the American embassy in London on January 16 (six days before it was delivered) for transmission to the foreign office and to the *Nation*, *Manchester Guardian* and *Daily News*.⁴ It was not very encouraging to the Allies, with its high impartiality and its ban on victory. Recently it had been officially explained to the foreign office that

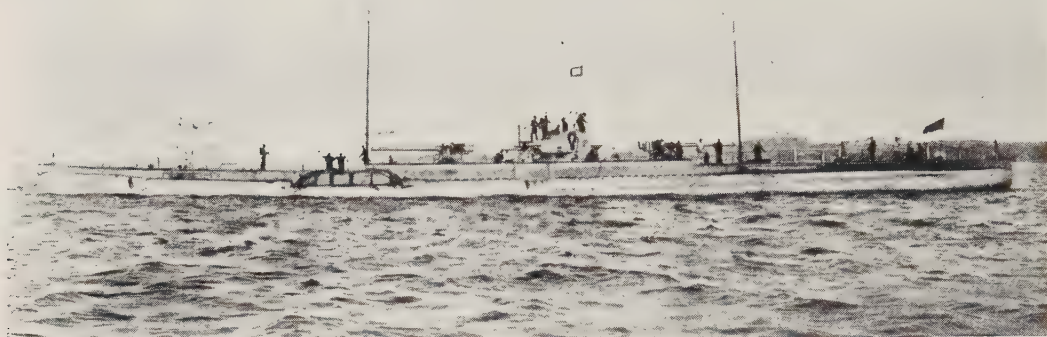
the note of December 18 should not be taken as placing the two sides on the same moral level: yet this speech seemed to do that very thing, or, if not that, yet to proceed to the conclusion to which that would lead, when it admonished the belligerents to be content merely to let the war stop and to console themselves for missing victory by rearranging Europe on American principles. It is not surprising that as a result the British government was much dejected, the British people disgusted, and even that in Germany there was some tendency to believe that, after all, perhaps they might have their unrestricted submarine campaign without paying for it. It had been determined that submarines could starve Britain and thus end the war before American participation could become effective, and that therefore it would pay to repudiate the pledge of May 4, even if that meant an American declaration of war; but so much the better if it did not.

Effect of American Participation

That good fortune Germany was fated, in spite of the speech of January 22, not to enjoy. Three days after the announcement of the ruthless submarine campaign, diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany were broken; and a month later, on February 5, congress assented to the president's suggestion of war. When at last he was in the war, he no longer thought that it could be properly ended without victory.

America was in the war, but it was a different war, different in many respects. One deadly fear that was beginning to obsess the British authorities was removed—the fear that they, and with them their allies, might be brought to a standstill by sheer lack of financial resources. The Central Powers were a solid block, self-contained and self-sufficient: at least, what they did not contain they had, generally, to do without. The Entente had the advantage of drawing on all the world, but it was not all advantage, for the world had to be paid. By far the most of the war expenditure of the Central Powers was internal: so long as their governments, by preserving hopes

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



GERMAN SUBMARINE OF THE *DEUTSCHLAND* CLASS

of victory or by any other means, retained their stability, so long their finances would be manageable. But it was not so with the Entente, which bought vastly from neutrals, especially from the United States. The keystone of the Entente finance was London, and London had by this time spent all her gold and all her foreign securities: it had become very doubtful whether Entente credit could be preserved any longer. Now that doubt was removed: by far the greatest creditor had herself come into the partnership, and brought with her a capital amply sufficient for all possible needs. That was the first of the great differences due to America's belligerence.

Britain was faced with another danger not less serious and only slightly less urgent than the financial one. This danger also was the necessary consequence of a characteristic advantage; the advantage of being an island involved the risk of isolation. The people were far more generally aware of this risk than of the other: in fact one aspect of it, the food shortage, had been a considerable element in popular dissatisfaction with the Asquith government. Now the risk was immensely increased by the intensifying of submarine activity. If only this risk could be fought off, victory might be attainable even without active American help: with that help, victory seemed certain apart from accidents: but there were to be accidents, the grave accident of the Russian

Revolution, with its almost fatal sequel in the March offensive.

But it was not only in its circumstances that the war was changed by American participation: its very purposes were affected. The British government and people believed themselves to be fighting for justice and even for freedom; no doubt they were glad to hope that one result of the war would be some arrangement, a league of nations for instance, to make war less likely in the future: they felt, the effective parts of them, that they and on the whole their allies stood for a view of the universe offering a natural contrast to that of their enemies, with more care for the individual and less for the State, with objects less material and with finer scruples about means, with a greater tendency to parliamentarism and democracy. But they had not set out on a crusade for ideas. To most British soldiers it was very really as well as formally their king and country that appealed, and not the wish to realize a set of political concepts.

Moreover, though no British statesman would have desired a war for the balance of power, yet most British citizens, being in a war, hoped that at its end power would be distributed more to their advantage than at the beginning; and, though few had any antagonism to the idea of a league of nations, perhaps fewer were convinced that that idea had extracted all interest from arrangements of power. Nor were they all certain that there would be nothing but

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

gain in re-drawing political maps on exclusively ethnographical lines: and their rulers knew that, for motives which they had judged sufficient, they had bound themselves to accept quite other guides in some of their map-drawing. Chance was to absolve them from giving Constantinople to Russia, and half Hungary to Rumania, but they were to find no such release from handing over Slav populations to Italy.

The United States were hardly in the war before Russia was out of it. At the very end of 1916, Rasputin, the charlatan and debauchee who had become an all-powerful favourite, was murdered, or executed: the principal minister was still Protopopov, a reactionary absolutist who was not even wholly sane. Revolution seemed inevitable, but Lord Milner and General de Castelnau, heads of an allied mission in Russia at the time, believed that it would not happen till the war was over. They were wrong: the revolution, stimulated by hunger, began with food riots on March 9; in a few days troops were mutinying; in a week there was no government in Petrograd, and the question was whether one was to be supplied by the Executive Committee of the Duma or by the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, the Soviet. On the 15th the Tsar abdicated in favour of his brother Michael. The soviet was persuaded by Kerensky, the farthest to the Left of all the provisional

ministers, to postpone the establishment of the republic to the winning of the war; but the very next day the grand duke remitted the question of sovereignty to a future constituent assembly.⁵

The provisional government, composed almost wholly of moderates, lasted just two months. It stood by the war, and in general the field army and its leaders stood by the government. Of the Socialists composing the Petrograd soviet the majority, while adopting the "no annexations and no indemnities" formula, excluded Belgium and Serbia from its scope and wished to continue the war: it was only the Bolshevik minority which desired an immediate cessation of hostilities, but it had strong allies—German agitators, Austrian peace offers, the natural war-weariness of the masses. Early in April these allies found a rallying point in the invitation issued by the Dutch members of the "International" to a Socialist peace conference at Stockholm. Discipline in the army was falling to pieces. In the middle of May the provisional government tried to strengthen itself by admitting members of the Left: at the same time it had the advantage of the presence of representatives from France, Belgium, America, and Britain, the last being Mr. Arthur Henderson. By the middle of June there was hope that the Russian army might yet play its part: but by that time the Stockholm Conference was assembling, and so was the All-Russia



GERMAN SUBMARINE OF THE "U" TYPE

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Soviet Congress : nevertheless the army was galvanized into one more effort.

So far Germany had taken no great military advantage of the crumbling of Russia : she still had seventy-six divisions on the eastern front, though they were not troops of the highest quality,⁶ all of whom were moved to the west. Therefore the



THE TSAR OF RUSSIA

Brussilov offensive which began with the month of July had some chance of success, which at first it seemed likely to realize ; but in a week its impetus was exhausted, in three weeks it had become a rout, the Bolshevik revolution was in full swing, and Russia was out of the war.

It is unreasonable to suppose that the Russian revolution could have been averted or exploited if only the western governments had been a little cleverer or a little more progressive. Nor is it relevant here to inquire what causes produced it or what is its significance in the light of eternity. The causes, at any rate, were too deep-rooted and too widespread to be removed by any diplomatic dexterities. The imme-

diante effect was one of the half-dozen great changes of the war, and therefore one of the crises in the history of the British people. At last the Germans had, after so many efforts to get it and after they had given up all hope of it, what gave them their one chance of a military victory, a war on a single front. The Allies now had two anxieties : would the British defeat the submarines and keep themselves sufficiently supplied to remain effective belligerents ? Would the French and British at least hold the western front till American reinforcements enabled them to strike the final blow ? The working out of those two questions is the history of the rest of the war.

This was nothing like the occupation which the Entente governments and general staffs had anticipated for 1917. They had supposed that that year would find them in overwhelming strength. Verdun and the Somme had shown them that the enemy could be beaten, and taught them what were the resources necessary for any given operation : they were now the equals in equipment of the Germans, rather their superiors, notably by the invention of the tank : their numbers were superior and might be increased. Therefore they might reasonably hope for the crowning victory during the summer of that year, and their strategy was designed to that end. Turkey was to be assaulted in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, and in Macedonia ; the Central Empires from Russia, Italy, and France. With its accumulated resources and experience the Entente might feel certain of success : the German leaders were not at all sure that it was wrong, and that was why they gambled on their submarines, hoping for a quick end by the knocking out of Britain. The Entente plan was fatally disarranged by the Russian collapse : by the middle of 1917 it was clear that their great conception of simultaneous attack was not to be realized that year. There had been some military successes —Bapaume, Chemin des Dames, Bagdad—but not on a scale to foreshadow a decision. Military activities were not to be the business of the year : that was, essentially, the blockade : there was fighting as well, heavy fighting at Ypres, Caporetto, Cambrai ; and

FOOD-RATIONING MEASURES

there was the ever-present man-power problem: but if only the blockade could be resisted America could in time supply men enough to make sure that the fighting came right.

It has been seen that already before the beginning of the absolute blockade the impeding of ocean traffic had produced grave problems, and especially that the supply and distribution of food were causing discontent among the people and anxiety in the government. Almost the first act of the Lloyd George ministry was the appointment of Lord Devonport as food controller, with power to seize private stocks, to demand information about stocks and prices, to control factories, and to take over land improperly cultivated. At first the use made of these powers was not very drastic: the amount of beer to be brewed was cut down by 30 per cent. in order to increase the supplies of barley and sugar available for food: the importation of rice (like that of sugar and wheat) was brought under governmental control: householders were besought to limit their purchases to weekly rations of four pounds of bread, two and a half of meat, and twelve ounces of sugar, for each of their dependants: maximum prices were fixed for potatoes, maximum numbers of courses for meals, maximum numbers of days per week on which meat might be eaten. These measures were not very effec-

tive: more might be hoped from the Corn Production Act (passed in April), which established minimum prices for wheat and oats.⁷

By May the government controlled all food imports: but in spite of the evident



THE ATTACK ON THE WINTER PALACE, PETROGRAD, 1917
From a Painting by E. Barnard Lintott, in the Imperial War Museum.

inadequacy of the voluntary rationing scheme and in spite of the appearance of queues Lord Devonport remained unwilling to institute compulsory rationing. The substitution on June 15 of Lord Rhondda for Lord Devonport marked the end of the tentative period and the beginning of a really systematic fixing of prices and limiting of consumption.⁸ Local committees were set up to provide

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

the administration with knowledge which a central office could hardly acquire, and an elaborate costing department, with branches organized in each district by chosen firms of accountants, endeavoured to keep down profits to the pre-war rates. In the course of the year prices had been fixed for all the principal foodstuffs—bread, meat, milk, butter, cheese, potatoes, sugar, tea, bacon—and for many others as well, so that 94 per

prices had a very considerable success: in the first three years of the war food prices had increased much more rapidly in the United Kingdom than in any other country except Austria; in the last year and a half they rose less rapidly than elsewhere—indeed the rate of increase was divided by four, and became much less than the corresponding rate for other necessities. This was partly due to the introduction of the

bread subsidy in August, 1917, but mainly to the system of control. That system was largely, if not so largely, successful in its other main object: for the spirit of the country it was almost as important that profiteering should be stopped as that prices should be kept down. Here anything like absolute success was impossible, for prices had to be fixed so that the dealer with the smallest turnover might make a living, and that left a wide margin of profit for the large and efficient firm: but on the whole profits were kept down and, what was even more important, the public was very generally convinced that the authorities were making an honest and intelligent attempt to keep them down.



LORD RHONDDA

From a Photograph by Reginald Haines.

cent. of all the food eaten was subject to maximum prices. At the same time control over supply was enormously extended: whereas before only wheat and sugar had been controlled, now the great bulk of essential foods passed through the hands of the government: in the end 85 per cent. of the food consumed by the civil population was bought and sold by the ministry of food, and this control was largely internationalized by executive committees representing the western allies. The system thus organized was so far successful that the United Kingdom more nearly than any other European country kept to its habitual standard of food-supply, while the distribution was more even than it had ever been.

The control of supply and the fixing of

Keeping down profits and prices, however, was only half the problem: distribution was the other half. The government was long unwilling to adopt the expedient of rationing, in which it saw a danger of producing discontent at home and encouragement among our enemies. But in the winter of 1917-18 two causes combined to make necessary the application of compulsion to the distribution of food. The whole food difficulty was a part of the blockade situation, though it was aggravated by a world-wide shortage of some commodities. Now, towards the end of 1917 it was evident that no perfect answer to the submarine challenge had been found. The total number of tons of all commodities which could be imported in 1918 would be



Photos: Sport and General.

BEFORE THE RATIONING ORDER

Queues waiting to obtain margarine.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

considerably less than the total for 1917. Another and a more immediately urgent incentive to rationing was the phenomenon of queues. When a particular food—butter for instance, or margarine—was at a price at which consumers were willing to buy a great deal more of it than existed (and that was the situation produced by control), then there grew up among consumers a competition to secure the greatest possible

last-moment variation: it was characteristic of the British system, and was no doubt instrumental in persuading the masses that they were receiving full justice. The fears that rationing would be unpopular proved unfounded: this was due partly to the skill and care which Lord Rhondda had devoted to capturing opinion (especially by being always accessible and agreeable to journalists), partly to the disappearance of



FOOD QUEUE AT A BUTCHER'S SHOP

Photo: Sport and General.

amount of the commodity in question. Waiting in queues was the form the competition took: it was highly undesirable: it fatigued and demoralized the competitors, it advertised difficulties and it offered the greatest measure of success to those who had fewest calls on their time. These were the determining causes of the introduction of compulsory rationing.

At the end of January Lord Rhondda announced that it was imminent, and a month later it began. Before, the only check on distribution had been the attempt to allot to all retailers the same percentage of their normal supplies: now, by means of coupons there was apportioned to each individual the same ration of meat or butter or sugar. The fixing of the meat ration not by weight but by price was a

queues, but essentially to efficiency of administration and the consequent conviction that justice was being done, and to the fact that for the rest of the war supplies were secured which, if they were not ample, at least were not gravely insufficient. The Rhondda administration and the development of domestic supplies were no doubt inadequate to feed the British people for an indefinite period, but they did effectually solve the problem for the time which the war was destined to last.

Shortage of ships was a danger even more threatening to the British people, though it affected their imagination less than shortage of food. Indeed it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the unqualified blockade which began in February, 1917, was the most vital danger which the British



"HER SLAYER FLED"

From a Water-colour Drawing by Arthur W. Burgess.

MEAT CARD (L. and H. C.)

Office of Issue

A. Holder's Name

Gordon Mary
Address
78, Mayberry Ave.
N. 7

B. Holder's Signature

Mary Gordon
C. Butcher's Name and Address
Goodheart
16, High Road N. 7

IF FOUND, DROP IN A PILLAR BOX.

INSTRUCTIONS.

1. It is valid only once with your Butcher by filling in your name at "D" and the date of issue at "E" and giving him that part of the card.
2. Should you wish to use it for meat, fill in your Butcher's name at "B" and the date of issue at "E". You can only use it once for meat.
3. You can only use it for meat, but not for sugar or butter. You can only use it once for meat.
4. Each ration card represents a portion of the weekly ration, and can be used only in the week to which it relates. A coupon or coupons must be cut out of the card at each purchase.
5. This Card may be used only by or for the holder. On his death, it may be used by or for his estate or the nearest Food Office, or dropped in a pillar box.

Penalties for Misuse: £100 or six months imprisonment, or both.

MINISTRY OF FOOD.

NATIONAL RATION BOOK (R)

INSTRUCTIONS.

It is essential that you read these instructions and the leaflet which will be sent you with this Book.

The National Ration Book is a book in which you will keep your ration coupons and the card which will be sent you with this Book.

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Valid only for: Valid only for: Valid only for: Valid only for:
Wk. to 5th Jan. Wk. to 12th Jan. Wk. to 19th Jan. Wk. to 26th Jan.
or .. 2nd Mar. or .. 9th Mar. or .. 16th Mar. or .. 23rd Mar.

NOTICE—This set of Sugar Coupons is sufficient to last the recipient for eight weeks from the date of issue, and no more coupons will be issued till the expiration of that period. Each coupon must be given up to the retailer upon the purchase of the sugar ration for the week to which it is applicable. No coupon is valid unless it is used in the proper week.

LARD

13

LARD

14

LARD

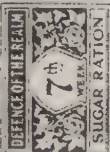
15

LARD

16

LARD

17



HORNSEY FOOD CARD. D.3.

A. Butter and Margarine.

H. Shopkeeper's Name

11, HIGH ROAD N.

Address

B. Shopkeeper's Name

71, QUEEN'S PARADE

Address

Address

C. Shopkeeper's Name

Address

D. Shopkeeper's Name

Address

INSTRUCTIONS.

1. Fill in your Name and Full Address clearly opposite (E) below, and register this Card at once with your Shopkeeper for Butter and Margarine by giving him that part of the Card. He will fill up the two spaces marked A.
2. Do nothing with the rest of the Card unless public notice is given that the Card is to be used for buying other goods besides Butter and Margarine.
3. This part must be produced every time you want to buy Butter or Margarine.
4. It is only available at the shop where you have registered.
5. It is not transferable.

Customer's Signature

(F)

Full Address

Customer's Signature

(G)

Full Address

MINISTRY OF FOOD. R.1.

PURCHASER'S SHOPPING CARD.

This Card is valid only with the Retailer who issued it and whose name appears below. If you change your Retailer, the latter must issue a new card.

RETAILER'S NAME AND ADDRESS.

The Retailer must stamp his name and address below before issue. Otherwise the card will not be valid.

G. D. HARDING,
10, HIGH ROAD

PURCHASER'S NAME AND ADDRESS.

THIS CARD IS VALID ONLY WITH THE RETAILER WITH WHOM THE HOLDER IS REGISTERED.

C59482 JNO. 12961/2513 55500000 870 16-2-1

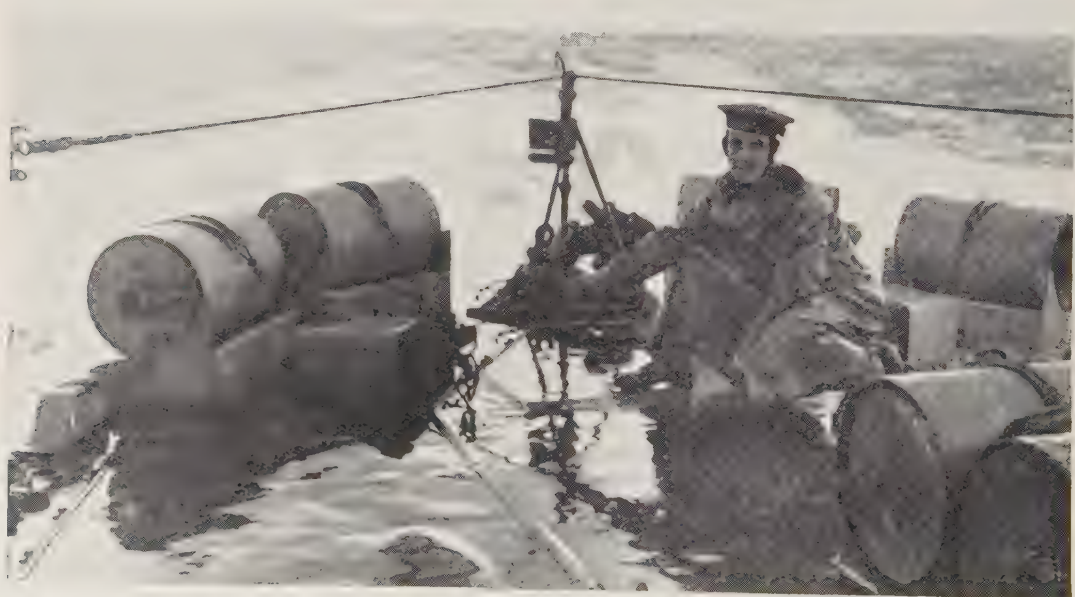
* From top to bottom the big squares represent rations for five persons (i.e. one week); from side to side they represent rations for 12 weeks for one person. Each small square represents one quarter of a week's ration for one person.

NOTE: WEEKS COMMENCE ON DATES GIVEN BELOW

	Nov 2	Nov 15	Nov 29	Dec 6	Dec 13	Dec 20	Dec 27	Jan 3	Jan 10	Jan 17	Jan 24	Jan 31	Feb 7	Feb 14	Feb 21	Feb 28	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 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9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29	Mar 6	Mar 13	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 3	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 24	Apr 30	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 2	Jul 9	Jul 16	Jul 23	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27
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THE STERN WAVE OF A SUBMARINE



FIGHTING THE SUBMARINE WITH THE DEPTH-CHARGE

Standing by to release the charge.

From Crown Copyright Photographs in the Imperial War Museum.



BRITISH DESTROYER AT FULL SPEED AFTER DROPPING A DEPTH-CHARGE



A DEPTH-CHARGE EXPLODING

From Crown Copyright Photographs in the Imperial War Museum.

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people has ever run. When it began, all British tonnage was already withdrawn from neutral trade, and was being used for war purposes direct or indirect, the combatant services of Britain and her allies and the necessary provisioning of their civilian populations: even so it was very barely sufficient.⁹

lost in February over five, in March nearly six, in April getting on for nine hundred thousand tons gross. The government knew and could hardly disguise that wastage at such a rate meant inevitable defeat. Every possible device was utilized to keep down the losses and to make the best use of all



OVERCOMING THE MINE MENACE: LOWERING THE PARAVANE
An ingenious invention which effectually protected ships against floating mines.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

What was to happen if it were much further reduced? The Germans were not unreasonable in believing that it would be much further reduced, and that the result would be to give them victory. At first their submarines were so successful that, for instance, in the second half of April ships leaving the United Kingdom had only about three chances in four of returning safely. In the first three months of the campaign nearly 14 per cent. of such vessels were sunk. Allied and neutral shipping

available ships. The allocation of tonnage was increasingly centralized, till at the end of the war 90 per cent. of the world's sea-going tonnage was controlled by the Allied Maritime Transport Council, which devoted half of all the world's tonnage to the commercial and nearly a quarter to the combatant services of the Allies.¹⁰ The production of new tonnage was accelerated: the United Kingdom launched in 1917 half as many tons again as in 1916 (very nearly as much as in the boom year of 1913); and in 1918



THE PARAVANES AT WORK

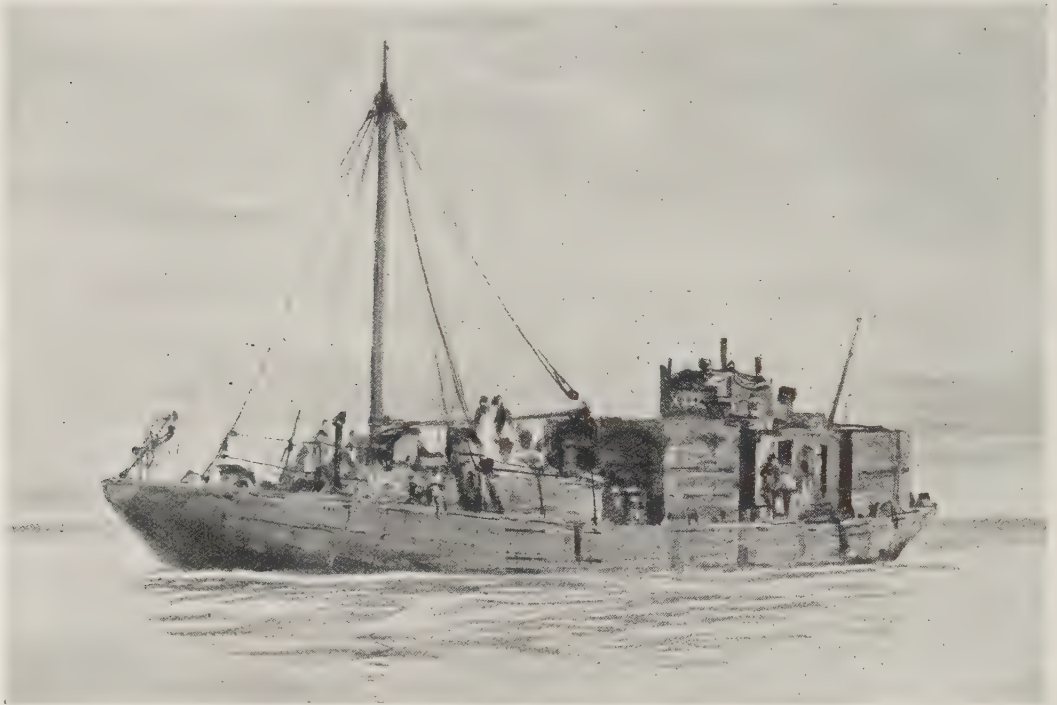
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two and a half times as many as in 1917. The increase in the United States was much more rapid, so that by the spring of 1918 construction was gaining on destruction, and the submarines were beaten. At the same time American co-operation made possible tighter agreements with the neutrals, so that Germany herself was more closely blockaded than ever.

were multiplied, and as hydrophones and other means of detecting submarines were developed. One way and another, offensive measures kept down the average number of German submarines in active commission to under fifty, and even for these numbers in 1918 battleships were being scrapped for material or robbed of their crews.

Defensive tactics and devices were also



FIGHTING THE SUBMARINE: A DECOY SHIP OR "Q BOAT"

From a Drawing by W. L. Wylie, R.A.

But before that consummation was reached many other methods had been tried. Decoy ships, in the most harmless disguises, rounded on their pursuers: and when the Germans grew suspicious, the decoys manoeuvred to be torpedoed before they replied. This method was heroic, but obviously it was one the efficiency of which would continually diminish. The offensive weapon that proved most effective was the depth-charge, a bomb constructed to explode at any required depth of water: and this, unlike the decoy, was a weapon which grew more and more effective as its design was improved, as the craft to use it, boats and seaplanes,

developed. A new invention, the paravane, was towed under water to ward off mines and to catch submarines: ships were painted to disguise their shape and their direction: nets and mines were used to keep submarines out of defined areas: most effective of all, merchant ships were convoyed from port to port.

The submarine menace was defeated by a combination of all these methods and by the courage and efficiency of the men who worked the ships. The British merchant sailor, whether officer or man, was in peace-time perhaps the worst-paid of all workers, and though his remuneration rose in war-time,



A Naval "Rigid" on patrol.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.



A patrol of "F2A" flying boats bombing a German submarine.

From the Painting by C. R. Flening-Williams, in the Imperial War Museum.

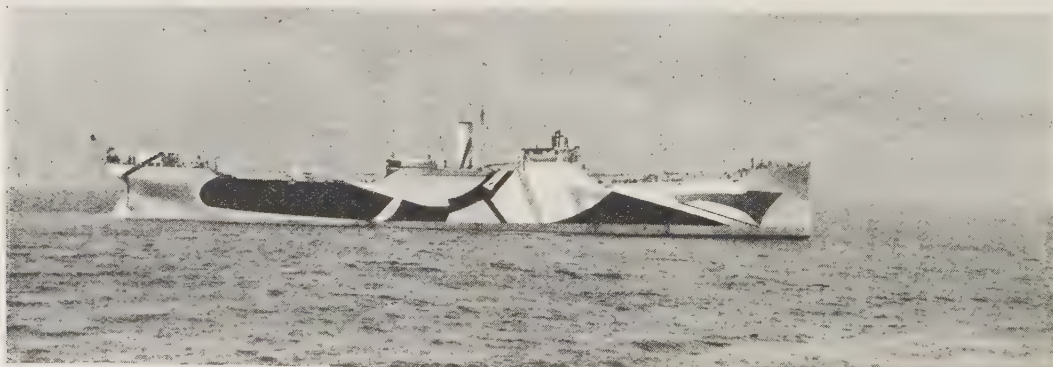
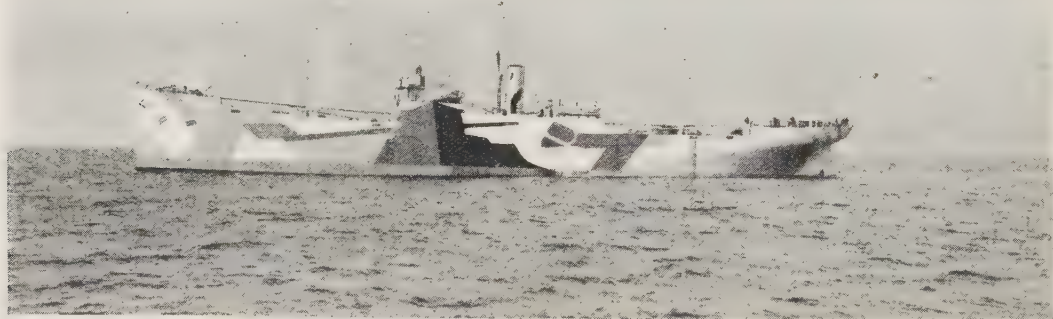
FIGHTING THE SUBMARINES FROM THE AIR

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it did not rise at a rate to compensate him for the increased dangers and discomforts nor to dissuade him from his belief that the shipowner, by comparison with himself, was farcically over-rewarded. Moreover, for many years before the war, owners had been complaining that the supply of trustworthy officers was steadily diminishing, and owners and masters alike had been more and more coming to the view that of all sailors the British—with their trade unions and their board of trade regulations, their fondness for drink and their impatience of discipline—were the least satisfactory to an employer. Yet to the officers and men of the mercantile marine we owe a greater debt of gratitude and admiration than to any other class of the community. Never throughout the war was a ship's sailing delayed by lack of courage and endurance on the part of a British seaman: and in a time when the British people began uncomfortably to wonder whether the Royal Navy had the

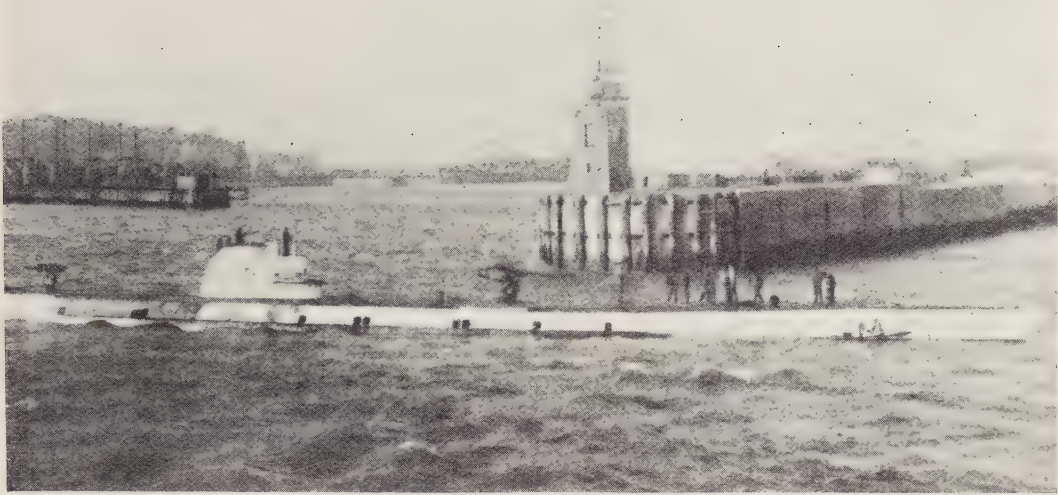
magical efficiency of peace-time legend, it found some consolation in learning that the merchant service was very much more adequate (even if its owners were very much more excessively rewarded) than it had ever supposed. How much we owe to neutral sailors also, especially Norwegians, should not be forgotten; but it is no sacrifice of truth to patriotism to put the performance of the British mercantile marine above all other feats of the war.

The interest of the combat in 1917 had been the effort of Britain to avoid strangulation: she had succeeded: in 1918 there were sunk a good deal less than half as many tons as in 1917, building was beating sinking, Britain might be incommoded but she could not be threatened again. It seemed that Germany's last chance was gone and that the only doubt left was how long she could postpone utter defeat: yet still once more she came near to snatching a decisive victory.



A CAMOUFLAGED TRAMP STEAMER

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ENTRANCE TO HELIGOLAND HARBOUR

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

CHAPTER IX

WAR-AIMS AND WAR-WEARINESS

NINETEEN-SEVENTEEN was pre-eminently the political year of the war: of the manner and significance of its two great political developments—the Russian revolution and the American entry into the war—some indication has already been given; but there were other political developments, too, which cannot be quite neglected.

Of these the most striking and the most really important were connected with the discussion of war-aims. The British people, in overwhelming majority, had one very simple aim—being at war to achieve victory, and no very clear ideas as to the use to be made of victory when it had been won. The government, and by far the most of such private citizens as cared or knew anything about foreign politics, had more specific reasons for desiring victory: they knew,

indeed, that compromise was impossible. Germany undefeated would certainly not give to Belgium and Serbia the minimum of security and reparation without which the British government must feel itself shamed and beaten. What was more, unless Germany were not merely defeated but crushingly defeated, she would refuse to cede Alsace and Lorraine to France. Britain and France were reciprocally bound by a pact signed after a month's war, neither of them to conclude peace nor to demand conditions except in agreement with the other. Russia had been in that bond, and in November, 1917, she was suing for peace all the same; but that was no excuse for repudiation by Britain, and no government suggesting such a course would have survived an hour.

Now, Alsace and Lorraine were the war-

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aim of France. It was not only that the mass of Frenchmen believed with passion that France had the same right to Alsace and Lorraine as England to Kent and Lancashire, and that a section numerically considerable and intellectually admirable had been preaching for a generation that it was France's duty as soon as possible to begin fighting for them and to go on fighting till she had won them back,—there was more in it than that. Déroulède and his friends and successors had not reached their object of persuading France to run the hazards of aggression, and in the twentieth century were on the whole slipping farther back from it. But France was convinced, dreadfully convinced, that national defeat was the most intolerable of evils and that the loss of the eastern provinces was the symbol of it. She was convinced also that she was exposed to new attack, against which the only protection lay in alliances. It is not fair to say that the war was a French war of revenge: the French government and the French people were agreed against aggression: but it is perfectly true that, when the war was begun (on their part innocently, as they believed), government and people alike resolved that it should be a *revanche*, a return match, which should be decisive.

France's Symbol of Victory

In this resolve there was, no doubt, some of the malice, the will to hurt, which "revenge" suggests to English ears and which of all human motives is the only one that is thoroughly bad: but finer things were there as well. A country which had been for twenty centuries occupied, not ignobly, with war, and which had been for more than half that time persuaded, not unreasonably, that it led the world of civilization, a country with such a past and keenly aware of it, had been profoundly affected by defeat. For more than a generation she had believed herself inferior to what she had been and to what she might be, and victory her only remedy. That those Frenchmen who combated these beliefs were inclined to an irony that was almost frivolous and a scepticism that was often ribald persuaded the domi-

nant party all the more of its rightness. France, then, if she had not willed a war because she wanted victory, at least would not accept a peace which left her less than certain that she was victorious: and her test was the lost provinces.

Ending the War by Compromise

This was reason enough, though there were many other reasons, why the notion of ending the war by compromise had little chance of success. Nevertheless, in the course of 1917 this notion came in for more and more discussion. By far the most important person who had held it, the President of the United States, held it no longer. But if the suggestion had thus lost weight it was continually gaining numbers. There had always been a large class of persons to whom the war seemed irrelevant or inopportune or at least incidental, a class which included most neutrals. It included also all really thorough-going social revolutionaries, men to whom national relations were nothing and economic relations everything. To such people the important thing was that the war should end—how it ended mattered very little. They were glad to believe that neither side could win, and calculated, with truth, that that belief would by itself suffice to bring peace, if only it were spread widely enough.

As events were to prove, the belief was false, and the attempt to impose it unsuccessful; yet by the beginning of 1917 it, or something like it, was already a dominant motive in very important quarters. The suggestions of peace at the end of 1916 and the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare early in 1917 were not isolated incidents. German politicians, and even German soldiers, had in the course of 1916 come more and more to the conviction that it was unreasonable to reckon on any improvement in their military situation.¹ That was why they had urged President Wilson to his attempt, and why later they urged the pope to his. The Austrian government was even more completely and cordially persuaded of the necessity of recourse to diplomacy, and repeatedly impelled its ally in that direction. A German historian



DENIECOURT CHÂTEAU, ESTRÉES

From the Drawing by Mairhead Bone, in the Imperial War Museum.

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nas remarked that at this time the choice for the Central Powers was between an agreed peace and defeat, for the Entente between an agreed peace and victory. Perhaps the antithesis was not in fact so absolute: yet it contained at least this much truth, that the Central Powers would seek in vain for peace by agreement until they had persuaded the Entente that it could not conquer and that it could have terms which would be preferable to being conquered. In this task they failed; and the reason, if not for their failure at least for its manner and magnitude, was the *Nebenregierung*, the dual government, which was the characteristic vice of imperial Germany.

Power of the General Staff

In every country during the war there was a strong tendency for the power of generals to increase, and with it their interest in and influence on policy. Their enormous patronage, the close connexion between the prestige of the commander and the security of his country, the modern belief in the expert, the force which in disturbed circumstances individuals who know their own minds may draw from the very fewness and narrowness of their ideas, the jealousy of politicians felt by many journalists and their willingness to ally themselves with soldiers, the eclipse of party politics—all these things worked together (not least in England but most in Germany) for the glory of the general staff and the power of its chiefs. In Germany indeed the generals, uplifted by the whole history of their country, defended by a censorship of their own, and rivalled only by politicians whose weakness was evident and whose character was unrepresentative, were a government in themselves. Before the breach with the United States this government was already more powerful than that whose president was the chancellor, and during the twenty-two months that the war still continued its predominance was continually reinforced.

Here is the clue to the tortuous windings of the peace negotiations and intimations of 1917. Austria-Hungary was insisting to Germany that she could not go on and that peace must be made: the German

government was not able to offer terms which would have any chance of acceptance: if any minister had proposed, for instance, the cession of Alsace and Lorraine he would have found himself absolutely without support. But what made it quite hopeless to attempt to begin communications which might lead in the end to peace was the insistence of the German commanders (although they too by the end of 1916 thought that there was no more to be hoped from the war and that the sooner it was over the better) on claims which the Entente could not even appear to consider without confessing failure. Twice, indeed, they hoped that they had found the weapon to force the Entente to admit defeat—when they relieved the submarines of all restrictions, and when the March offensive began so well: but on neither occasion was disappointment long in coming.

Equally fruitless were Entente attempts to make a separate peace with the Austro-Hungarian monarchy: that state, perhaps of all the belligerents the most responsible for the outbreak of war, was the first and the most undisguisedly anxious for peace. But though she might do something to bring Bethmann-Hollweg or Kuehlmann to comparative moderation, she was powerless to move Hindenburg and Ludendorff: and even if she could have been persuaded that a great act of treachery would not be repaid by the substitution for the present war of an inevitable future one with Germany, yet she could not be expected to throw into the bargain her consent to her own dismemberment. Lenin relieved Britain and France of a large part of their liabilities under the secret treaties: enough remained to ensure regret, if not repentance. Italy could not be persuaded to forgo a jot of her claims, and all hope of accommodation with Austria had to be abandoned.

Germany's Peace Terms

It was Germany, after all, in spite of the pessimism of her authorities and her allies, who was to make the first victorious peace. It was the Russian revolution that gave her the opportunity, and when the time came Germany left no illusions as to the sort of peace likely to result when she was

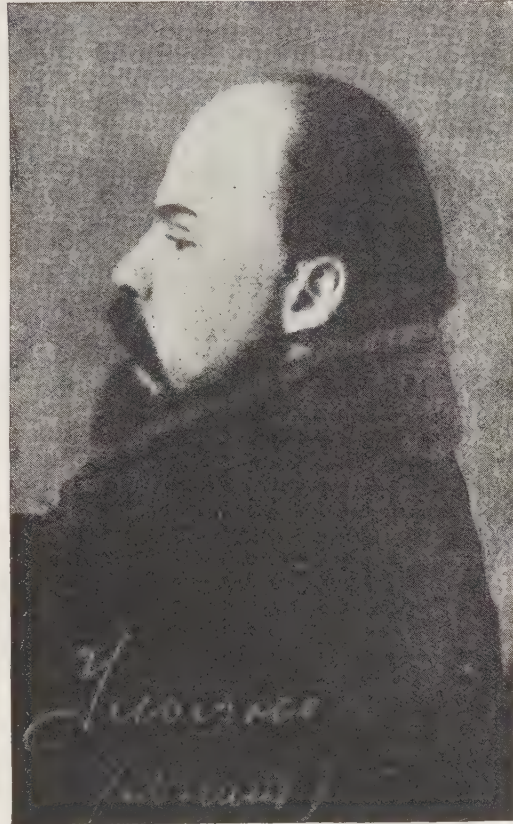
FUTILE PEACE MOVES

the conqueror. The great Italian disaster at Caporetto also owed something to war-weariness and revolutionary inclinations, and it came measurably near to providing the Central Powers with a second chance of peace-making. A second chance actually was provided by the Rumanian collapse. But it is time to return nearer home, and to see how the British people were affected by the talk of peace.

On the whole it is true that every move towards negotiation had a tendency to strengthen the fighting spirit: the people of the state towards which the gesture was directed were apt to believe that it was a trap, or a sign of weakness, or both together: in the country from which the initiative had proceeded it was inevitably argued that since the enemy would make no response to offers so reasonable, now clearly he was amenable to nothing but force, and that fighting must continue, sacrifices be borne, for just a little longer, if all that had gone before were not to be wasted. Yet the continual discussions—private, public, official, unofficial, honest, dishonest—as to peace possibilities, which went on and were known to be going on throughout the last two years of the war, did have effects adverse to the fighting spirit in Great Britain as elsewhere.

There were three classes of persons upon whom these effects were most notable—a considerable, and indeed dominant, section of Socialists, of whom Mr. Ramsay MacDonald may be taken as the type; the more professionally intellectual Liberals, whose fugleman was Mr. Massingham; and the not inconsiderable numbers, of whatever political party, who thought that the two and a half years of war were more than any consideration was worth, and that continued fighting was unlikely to improve the proportion. Of these the most prominent representative was Lord Lansdowne. It is not suggested that these three classes are exhaustive, and still less that they are mutually exclusive. In the leadership of each of them there is some irony. The politician who had believed that the United Kingdom went to war because the foreign office disliked Germany and the admiralty

hankered after live targets was now determined that young men who had undertaken every sacrifice for the defence of liberty and small nations should not be forced to continued suffering in the interests of reaction and aggression: the journalist who had been one of the first to proclaim that Germany must be made to pay, and pay



ULIANOV LENEN (LENIN), THE DICTATOR OF
REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

heavily, now most loudly demanded that the war should be ended by compromise: the statesman especially responsible for the diplomatic situation of the United Kingdom feared that the prolongation of war would spell ruin for the civilized world.

The Labour Party Conference held at the beginning of the year was unrepentant in its support of the war: most of the evils of the day were attributed to the government's weak handling of profiteers, and there were complaints also of restrictions

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on civil liberty, but a resolution was passed expressive of the conference's determination to continue the fight until victory was achieved: there were motions from the Independent Labour Party and the British Socialist party which favoured the early re-

establishment of the International Socialist Bureau and the speedy termination of hostilities, but those parties were as yet in a very small minority. Indeed, at this time the section most clamorous for an end was that represented by the *Nation*, the *Daily News*, and the *Manchester Guardian*. A new word was beginning to be used to damn those who were not, as they would have said, Jingo: all such people had before been liable to the title of pacifists: the time was to come when they were lucky if not called Bolshevik: the victims might disavow these names, or they might find means



1. TWO OF THE RUSSIAN DELEGATES (M. JOFFE AND M. RAMENEFF) AT BREST-LITOVSK.
2. MEMBERS OF THE GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN DELEGATES AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE RUSSIANS AT BREST-LITOVSK

From Photographs by Topical Press.

THE PRESS AND RUSSIA

to persuade themselves at least that they were glorious. It was even more useless to deny the title of defeatist, and a good deal more difficult to make it glorious. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why defeatism was so seldom avowed: and indeed it may

to welcome the "glorious news of the successful Russian revolution" with its "warning to despots in Berlin—and nearer home—" and even to declare that "the happiest event in our generation is now triumphantly completed," and to patronize

the "genial paternal order" which had been established, it understood, in Petrograd. But such illusions could not last long. No doubt most other journalistic comments were almost equally re-



WHERE THE TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK WAS SIGNED

From a Photograph by Topical Press.

be believed that there were very few absolute defeatists—persons who were persuaded that if the war went on it must end in defeat; but there was a considerable, and increasing, number which was convinced that it could not end in victory, and which, for that and other reasons, desired that it should end in compromise, and the quicker the better. Commonly this argument was not avowed—merely hinted, at the most—but it was of a nature to be easily detected, and no doubt it was sometimes suspected where it did not exist. It spread more and more with weariness of the war and as hopes were continually deferred.

It was possible in March for the *Nation*



TROTSKY AT BREST-LITOVSK

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mote from knowledge and reality, and it is fair to remember that six months later Mr. Lloyd George still thought that Kerensky was "equal to his great task." The importance of the *Nation's* errors is that they involved it in much more than double disappointment. The clique of which it was the centre had to mourn not only that their country had lost an ally but also that

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

there had been a revolution which was not Liberal : some of them found some consolation in attributing both misfortunes to their country's fault.

There were other misfortunes besides the Russian, though that alone was enough to dishearten the timorous. In several respects

usefulness, but still it took time : and though the reasons may not have been generally known, yet the effects were visible enough : the great allied offensive that should bring victory was not to take place this year.

Of the blockade enough has already been said : its present discomforts—disagreeable



TYPICAL SCENE IN THE EAST END OF LONDON AFTER A ZEPPELIN RAID

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

the story of the French spring offensive is the strangest incident of the war. That Nivelle could persuade his government, after nearly three years' bitter experience of modern war and German capacity for it, of his ability to conquer the German army in forty-eight hours, would be incredible if it were not certain. It is almost equally remarkable that there should have been so much success in hiding the magnitude of his failure, and the great mutinies which followed it and which for a year incapacitated the French army from aggression. Pétain did wonders in nursing it back to

bread, rationed meat, watered beer—came home to all bosoms : its dangers were dangers that any home-keeping man or woman might see. Nor need much be said of the great disaster of Caporetto, or of the crushing of Rumania, which punctually supplied to Germany the triumph with which she was accustomed to close the campaigning season. None of these things meant a decision : for that the western front still waited. But if defeats in other theatres did not justify the belief that the Entente was to be conquered, at least they made it possible to argue (even when our successes were set

CAUSES OF WAR-WEARINESS

against them) that victory was improbable : the more because in three years of numerical superiority on the western front the Entente had quite failed to conquer the German army, and now, for a short space at least, it was the German army that had the numbers.

It was the emergence of such considerations as these which, if it did not much

beginning to be otherwise. The dead comrades of whom at the beginning it seemed that there was none

“so lonely and poor of old,

But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold,”* were now sometimes differently remembered, like that “Jack, cold-footed, useless swine,” who



AN OCTOBER NIGHT RAID ON LONDON IN 1917

Seen from the Royal College of Science, South Kensington.

From a Painting by Norman G. Arnold, in the Imperial War Museum.

increase the number of those who clamoured for compromise, did rather raise their note and added considerably to their audience. Other causes were co-operating to the same effect.

As the third year of the war went on, and the fourth, not even the most insensitive could altogether ignore that war brought death and dirt and disease and want and pain. These things at first had most powerfully, or at least most notably, affected the minds of those who were least exposed to them : towards the end of the war it was

“Panicked down the trench that night the mine
Went up at Wicked Corner ; how he'd tried
To get sent home ; and how, at last, he died,
Blown to small bits.”†

Sacrifice was differently recorded : before, soldiers

“ . . . poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth, gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that un hoped serene
That men call age ; and those who would have been
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.”‡

* Rupert Brooke, 1914—*The Dead*.

† Siegfried Sassoon—*The Hero*.

‡ Rupert Brooke, 1914—*The Dead*.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Now, when they died they knew not why,
except that they'd "been shot Horribly
through the guts," and still the war went
on; the effect was that

"Trunks, face downward in the sucking mud,
Wallowed like trodden sand-bags loosely filled;
And naked sodden buttocks, mats of hair,

"Here's an end to my art!
I must die and I know it,
With battle-murder at my heart—
Sad death for a poet!" ‡

Or,

"... how bloody if I'm done in
Under the freedom of that morning sky!" §

It is true that one reason why the poems



TYPICAL SCENE IN A SOUTH-WESTERN SUBURB OF LONDON AFTER A ZEPPELIN RAID

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

Bulged, clotted heads, slept in the plastering slime.
And then the rain began—the jolly old rain!"*

Formerly the poet had promised himself—

"The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth;
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
And with the trees to newer birth . . ."†

Now another poet thought, with a sense of
the sheer futility of struggle—

* Siegfried Sassoon—*Counter Attack*

† Julian Grenfell—*Into Battle*.

were different was because the men who
had written the earlier ones were dead.
It may be believed that, however much
Grenfell and Brooke might have felt the
horrors that so moved their successors, yet
they would have found other words to fit
them and other conclusions to draw from
them. At least they would not have
felt so keen a need to vent their bitterness

‡ Robert Graves—*Over the Brazier*.

§ Siegfried Sassoon—*Counter-Attack*.

THE POETS AND THE WAR



AN AIR-RAID NIGHT IN LONDON
King's Cross anti-aircraft gun in action.

From a Painting by Ronald Gray, in the Imperial War Museum.

as to risk suggesting that English squires commonly took fewer risks than their gardeners, or that English mothers were habitually filled with hatred. It is pleasant and (I think) just to believe that the earlier

poets represented the mass of their comrades more fairly than the later. There is no warrant for supposing that these behaved less bravely or meant less honestly than their predecessors, and they very evidently

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

retained the corporate loyalty and the passionate comradeship which are the essence of the regimental soldier. Yet they did represent one sort of discouragement: if no great part of the British army came to believe that ugliness was the only considerable element and the only possible effect of

fighting man was commonly incapable of these sentiments and uncomfortable at their expression. Then the confidence in advertisement characteristic of the age was not always fortunate in its manifestations: it would be false to suggest that all British soldiers had very sublime standards of

taste, but a good many of them felt some incongruity between a noble cause and an unselfish passion on the one side, and on the other the methods of the least bashful advertising agents and the least elevated of journalists. The war-aims problem, of which the last two years of the war heard so much, worked the same way. Some soldiers were shocked to think that their side could contemplate any material advantage or compensation from the loathsome business of fighting. Others thought that there were some claims that might legitimately be made, but dreaded lest their country, or at least their allies, had passed the limits of legitimacy. Still more found it difficult to avoid cynicism when they were assured that they were fighting for nothing but democracy, or small nationalities, or international arbitration. And for the men in Britain who were arguing that the



DAMAGE CAUSED BY A BOMB AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY, IN AN AEROPLANE RAID, SEPTEMBER 24, 1917

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

war, yet all the time the consciousness of war's ugliness was spreading.

Nor was it only that: for any normal man the longer he was at the war the less he liked it and the more he was disillusioned about his commanders: something was due also to mistakes and misbehaviours at home. These were of several sorts. Some papers and some politicians took pleasure in expressing hatred for the German, and even contempt for his soldiership: the British

war must be stopped, it was a real reinforcement to be able to assert that the soldiers at least saw good reasons for stopping it, and that some of them, the most articulate and not the least brave, saw nothing else.

There was war-weariness at home, too: some of it was the effect of aerial bombardment, but remarkably little. No doubt a good deal of hearty nonsense, of a would-be encouraging sort, was talked, and especially



THE DAYLIGHT RAID ON LONDON, JULY 7, 1917

Seen by the artist from the roof of the Royal College of Science, South Kensington; Brompton Oratory in the foreground.

From a Painting by Henry Ruckhury, in the Imperial War Museum.

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written, about the undesigned result of the bombardment of civilians in steeling the country's resolution and in increasing its hatred of Germans: but that was one of the results, and on the whole there was notably little panic and not more than was to be

It is true that the German calculation was not altogether wrong, that their aircraft did do some material damage, and also that it did produce some panic among the worst sections of the population, and in much wider circles did heighten, and



AFTER THE DAYLIGHT RAID ON LONDON, JULY 7, 1917

Scene at the General Post Office.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

expected of clamour for counter-measures. No doubt, also, the government might have been more efficient, or at least more promptly efficient, in taking counter-measures, but after a not intolerably long period of experimentation the counter-measures taken were commendably effective, and certainly the government was right in its determination not to authorize any appreciable weakening of the fighting forces overseas in order to strengthen the aerial defences at home.

did increasingly heighten, the tension on nerves already terribly stretched; but of the material damage very little was of any military importance, and of the moral damage it is difficult to believe that it had, or ever came near having, any considerable effect on strategy or policy. It is reasonable to suppose that had the Germans inhabited Britain and the British occupied Belgium, and had the British in those conditions determined to bomb Lon-

UNREST AMONGST WAGE-EARNERS

don, that would have been a very different bombing.

As to the general effect of the war on material comfort it is difficult to speak with any assurance. A good many of the very rich grew richer, and some of the most enterprising of the not rich (usually those of them with the lowest standards of moral obligation) grew rich; otherwise everyone was rather poorer, in goods if not in money, except the unskilled workers, who benefited by the certainty of employment and by the State's care that wages and prices should be in a proportion to make life supportable. Yet there was a formidable amount of labour unrest, which came in part from weariness of the war, and which itself increased that weariness. In the middle of 1917 a series of commissions under the chairmanship of Mr. Barnes (then minister for pensions) came to the opinion that "there is a strong feeling of patriotism on the part of employers and employed throughout the country, and they are determined to help the State in the present crisis. Feelings of a revolutionary character are not entertained by the bulk of the men. On the contrary, the majority of the workmen are sensible of the national difficulties, especially in the time of trial and stress through which we are now passing."

Causes for Industrial Unrest

Nevertheless, the commissioners distinguished fourteen different causes for the strikes, threats of strikes, discontent and intractability whose existence was undeniable. The fourteen causes were these:²

1. High food prices, and unequal distribution of food.

2. Restriction of personal freedom, and in particular the effects of the Munitions of War Acts. . . . In many cases the skilled man's wage is less than the wage of the unskilled.

3. Lack of confidence in the government—due to the surrender of trade union customs and the feeling that promises of their restoration would not be kept.

4. Delay in settlement of disputes.

5. Operation of the Military Service Acts.

6. Lack of housing in certain areas.

7. Restrictions on liquor.

8. Industrial fatigue.

9. Lack of proper organization among trade unions.

10. Lack of communal sense—particularly noticeable in South Wales.

11. Inconsiderate treatment of women, whose wages are sometimes as low as 13s.

12. Delay in granting pensions to soldiers.

13. Raising the limit of income-tax exemption.

14. Workmen's Compensation Act—a weekly maximum of £1 inadequate.

War Responsible for Grievances

There is no doubt that this classification was pretty accurate and almost exhaustive. On the other hand, to apportion the blame between the different causes would be quite impossible. To remove or even much to lessen them was hardly less difficult. The first five were wholly, the next three largely, and the last three again wholly, due to the war: the other three are always with us. As to the first five, it does not seem that there was any very reasonable grievance, with one exception. No doubt some improvement might be made in administrative methods, but on the whole the government was grappling with the circumstances in question as honestly and effectively as could be expected of any human institution. The real grievance was the circumstances, and the war which produced them. The exception was the disproportion between the remuneration of the skilled and unskilled, which was a very plain and a very hotly resented injustice, the more deplorable as the skilled men had naturally more than their numerical importance in the trade union movement. There was a serious, but quite unsuccessful, attempt made to deal with this difficulty, when in October a bonus of 12½ per cent. was (by administrative order of the ministry of labour) granted to certain classes of skilled labour: quite unsuccessful, because almost at once the clamour of the other labourers forced the government to extend the bonus to all men engaged on munitions.

Again, the income-tax grievance, the compensation grievance, could be dealt

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with by legislation, and so could the wages of women: the delay in granting pensions could be shortened by administrative reforms: but neither remedy was applicable to the remaining evils. Some might feel (and later history has proved them right) that there were other reasons for the restrictions on liquor besides the necessities of war. Industrial fatigue has plagued mankind from the beginning, and lack of proper organization among trade unions, though it began later, seems likely to continue as long. In short, all of the causes by which Mr. Barnes's committees explained the state of unrest among wage-earners were of two kinds: some were wholly, however necessarily, the results of war; the rest were evils to which flesh is naturally heir, but it was war that aggravated them. The same was true of the causes which the committees did not think worthy of mention: the feeling, for instance, that while ordinary people were astonishingly adequate to the enormity of the times, yet the men (politicians, diplomats, generals, captains of industry) who disposed of them were in general very perceptibly, and often scandalously, incompetent to their function: or the not unrelated feeling expressed by a very distinguished Liberal economist who said, "When young men are compelled to give their lives, I see no reason why old men should not be compelled to give their money." (Though the parallels were not exact: were there to be exemptions in the one case as in the other? And, after all, it was not quite true that any young man was compelled to give all his life, nor that any old man was allowed to give none of his money.)

The German Peace Move, July, 1917

It was the legitimacy of all these complaints which produced the fear, never justified, that pacifists and defeatists might prove persuasive, and which alarmed the British government lest the repeated peace moves of 1917 might make the British people unwilling to continue the war. Of all the peace moves the central one in point of time and perhaps in point of importance was the Reichstag resolution of July 19: "The Reichstag strives for a peace of under-

standing and the permanent reconciliation of the peoples. With such a peace forced acquisitions of territory and political, economic, or financial oppressions are inconsistent. The Reichstag also rejects all schemes which aim at economic barriers and hostility between the peoples after the war. The freedom of the seas must be made secure. Only economic peace will prepare the ground for a friendly intercourse between the nations. The Reichstag will actively promote the creation of International Law organizations."

Analysis of the Reichstag Resolution

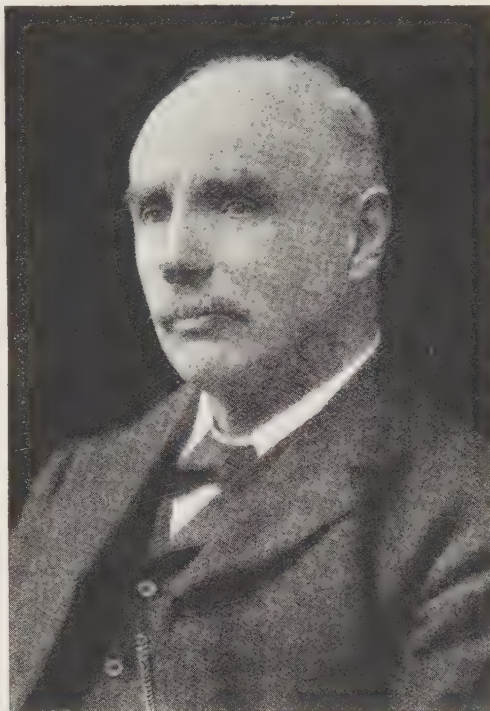
This resolution was the product of the conviction among the majority of German politicians of the impossibility of victory, reinforced by revelations of the comparative failure of the submarine campaign. Those who voted for it meant nothing that could possibly have been accepted by any Entente government; even less did the German government, and less still (what was no less important) the general staff. Nor is there any evidence that the staff represented the people less fairly than either of the other bodies. Yet the resolution did something to encourage the notion that with just a little more effort of will and intelligence peace might be obtained without victory or defeat. It also had a part in the development of another idea of great and not always fortunate significance, the idea that governments should not claim an exclusive, hardly even a preponderant, authority in the control, or rather the registration, of international relations. This idea found an echo in the resolution moved (and lost) in the House of Commons in answer to the Reichstag, with its desire "that the forthcoming Allied Conference on war-aims shall comprise representatives of the peoples, and not solely spokesmen of the Governments." What was more important, Mr. Lloyd George in July declared that while it was entirely the business of the German people themselves what manner of government they chose to rule over them, yet what manner of government we could trust to make peace with was our business, and we could make peace only with a free Ger-

FARCE OF THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE

many: in August President Wilson, replying to the pope's peace note, went further: after indicating the obligation to defeat a power which had secretly planned to dominate the world he declared, "This power is not the German people—it is the ruthless master of the German people," and went on to assert, "The test therefore of every plan of peace is this: Is it based upon the fate of all the peoples involved, or merely upon the word of an ambitious and intriguing government on the one hand, and a group of free peoples upon the other?"

August was the month also of another development of the now almost inseparable notions, the first (which was undeniably true) that if only there were enough talking there would be no more fighting, and the second (and more doubtful) that diplomacy was more democratic in the hands of men who had chosen themselves than in the hands of those chosen, on whatever method, by their countries. This was the sad farce of the Stockholm Conference, which was, or was to have been, a conference of Socialists of all countries to discuss conditions of peace. The genesis of the conference was at least partly due to the German government: and if respectable neutral Socialists like Branting had something to do with it, still more had men suspect to the enemies of Germany, men like Borbjerg, Helphand, Troelstra, and Lenin. The Socialists of France, Italy, Belgium, the United States all declined the invitation: British Socialists, though divided, were on the whole in favour of attendance, but were prevented from realizing their wish by the opposition of the government (which, in conjunction with its allies, refused passports) and of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union. The chief result of the episode was the resignation of Mr. Henderson: his place in the war cabinet was taken by Mr. Barnes, but it was no longer possible to identify official Labour with the administration: this was in a way the less serious, but at the same time the more complicating, since the leadership of the less docile or less patriotic wage-earners had passed to the "shop stewards," of whom the chief were for stopping the war at almost any cost.

The annual meeting of the Trades Union Congress, held in September, revealed the way in which the minds of trade union officials were working. The address of the retiring president³ (Mr. Hill, the Boiler-makers' secretary) intimated the determination of unionists to control politics and industry alike, and something not much



THE RT. HON. G. N. BARNES

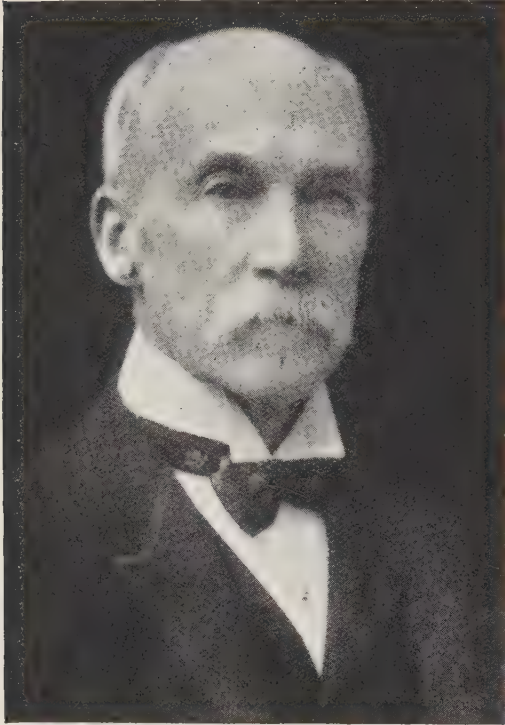
He succeeded Mr. Henderson as Labour representative in the War Cabinet.

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

less than a divine right to all political power: not one-tenth of the Commons could be called the representatives of the common people; industry and politics would not be separated; after the war, industry must be reconstructed by a strong and intelligent unionism co-operating with the Labour party (and indeed the Labour party and the congress were already negotiating for common premises); the congress must also take more seriously the international relations of labour, the more since it was not by military methods that German democracy would be substituted for German militarism,

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and since the right of allied democracy to meet the common peoples of all countries for the propagation and establishment of a world democracy was opposed by allied governments; he had great faith in the new government and in the liberated peoples of Russia and in their willingness to repudiate imperialistic and iniquitous aims. The con-



LORD LANSDOWNE

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

gress, however, was overwhelmingly against an International Labour Conference at Stockholm "at the present moment," though it thought some such conference prerequisite to the conclusion of a lasting and democratic peace, with the conditions that there must be preliminary agreement between the allied working classes, and that no minority in any delegation should have more than its proportionate voting power.

The next month saw another stage in the development indicated by Mr. Hill, when the Labour party was reconstituted so as to admit membership by individuals as well as by unions and societies, with the avowed

object of securing to producers by hand or brain the full fruits of their industry, on the basis of the common ownership of the means of production.

It is convenient to refer here to two more incidents in the history of war-aims discussion, and then the matter may be left till it again becomes urgent with the ending of the war and the generating of the peace. These two incidents are Lord Lansdowne's letter of November 28th, and the Labour memorandum on peace-terms in December, with which may be taken various official declarations of about the same time.

Lord Lansdowne had more than once been suggested as a possible prime minister or foreign secretary for a pacificatory government: he was, besides, one of the most respected Conservative politicians and one of the best-informed students of international relations. Therefore his pronouncement was eagerly hailed by all whose controlling motive was a desire to end the war. He was (so far as a passage of some ambiguity can be understood, though a later passage was specific with respect to Belgium) prepared to give up what nine-tenths of the Entente peoples thought the most honourable of all war-aims: he thought reparation and security both "essential, but of the two security is perhaps the more indispensable"; he hoped for an achievement even greater than an honourable end to the war, the achievement of preventing future war: this war was more dreadful than any before it, and the next would be more dreadful still; but it should be possible to see that there was no next: some of our original desiderata had probably become untenable, some less urgent, some (Belgian reparation, for instance) remained in the front rank: we were not going to lose the war, but if it was to be brought to a close in time to avert a world-wide catastrophe it would be because on both sides the peoples of the countries involved realized that it had already lasted too long: this feeling was already widespread in Germany, Austria, and Turkey, and it would doubtless be immensely stimulated by a pronouncement—



Photo: Illustrations Bureau.



Photo: Illustrations Bureau.



Illustrations Bureau.



Photo: Topical.



Photo: Alfieri.



Photo: Topical.

WOMEN ON HOME SERVICE DURING THE WAR

They served efficiently as guards on the Tube and Underground railways, as engine-cleaners, omnibus conductors, postwomen, and farm "hands," etc.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

(1) that we did not desire the annihilation of Germany as a Great Power,

(2) that we did not desire to impose upon her people any form of government not of their own choice,

(3) that, except as a legitimate war measure, we had no desire to deny to Germany her place among the great commercial communities,

(4) that we were prepared to examine in conference the question of "the freedom of the seas,"

(5) that we were prepared for an international pact affording ample opportunities for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

Labour and Peace Conditions

On December 28th a conference representing the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress accepted by 343 votes to 12 a memorandum on peace conditions which made suggestions a good deal different from Lord Lansdowne's, but even more different from the causes which had brought the British people into the war, and from a settlement acceptable either to the British government or to its allies, or to its enemies. It demanded the restoration of Belgium; the right of Alsace-Lorraine to decide its own political fate; the establishment of a super-national authority, an international legislature and court, and compulsory arbitration; universal democratization; the suppression of secret diplomacy; the general abolition of compulsory military service; the administration of all tropical African colonies by the super-national authority; and the discontinuance of economic war after the declaration of peace.⁴

Both documents fell flat, yet neither is without importance: their real importance is as evidence that war-weariness had spread beyond the circles where it had set in early because war was hateful simply as a national enterprise or as a cause of physical pain (two very defensible reasons for hating it), and that a majority of prominent trade union officials either suspected or, in some cases, pretended to suspect the British government of militarist and imperialist designs. The government did not content

itself with reiterating its previous declarations of war aims; there was an additional pledge by Lord Robert Cecil that neither he nor any other member of the government advocated an economic war after the war, and that he would not remain in any government which did not make a League of Nations one of its main objects: and on January 5th, 1918, the prime minister made to a trade union delegation a speech of such importance that its most characteristic sentences must be briefly indicated, for they are the official specification of the settlement to secure which the British people went on fighting, in the end victoriously, for nearly a year more.

British Government's War Aims

Mr. Lloyd George began by admitting the reasonableness of the clamour for definition of war aims: "We ought to be able to state clearly and definitely not only the principles for which we are fighting but also their definite and concrete application." He went on to state first what were not our objects: "We are not fighting a war of aggression against the German people . . . their destruction or disruption has never been a war aim with us . . . we were forced to join in the war in self-defence, in defence of the violated public law of Europe, and in vindication of the most solemn treaty obligations. . . . Nor are we fighting to destroy Austria-Hungary or to deprive Turkey of its capital, or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace, which are predominantly Turkish in race. . . . Nor did we enter this war merely to alter or destroy the imperial constitution of Germany. . . . Our point of view is that the adoption of a really democratic constitution by Germany would be the most convincing evidence that in her the old spirit of military domination had indeed died." Then came, after a little prefatory contempt for the statesmen of a hundred years earlier, the prime minister's positive projects: "The days of the Treaty of Vienna are long past. We can no longer submit the future of European civilization to the arbitrary decisions of a few negotiators striving to secure by

WAR AIMS OF BRITAIN AND THE ALLIES

chicanery or persuasion the interests of this or that dynasty or nation. . . . The first requirement, therefore, always put forward by the British government and their allies has always been the complete restoration, political, territorial, and economic, of Belgium, and such reparation as can be made for the devastation of its towns and provinces. . . . Next comes the restoration of Serbia, Montenegro, and the occupied parts of France, Italy, and Rumania. . . . We mean to stand by the French democracy to the death in the demand they make for a reconsideration of the great wrong of 1871."

Britain's Attitude to Russia and Turkey

Mr. Lloyd George next disclaimed all responsibility for revolutionary Russia, which was busy making a separate peace, and continued, "An independent Poland, comprising all those genuinely Polish elements who desire to form part of it, is an urgent necessity": genuine self-government on true democratic principles must be granted to those Austro-Hungarian nationalities which had long desired it: equally vital were the legitimate claims of the Italians for union with those of their own race and tongue. "While we do not challenge the maintenance of the Turkish Empire in the homelands of the Turkish race with its capital at Constantinople—the passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea being internationalized and neutralized—Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine are, in our judgment, entitled to a recognition of separate national conditions. . . . With regard to the German colonies, I have repeatedly declared that they are held at the disposal of a conference whose decision must have primary regard to the wishes and interests of the native inhabitants. . . . Finally, there must be reparation for injuries done in violation of international law. The Peace Conference must not forget our seamen. . . . A great attempt must be made to establish by some international organization an alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes."

With this speech should be read President Wilson's "fourteen points" speech of

January 8th: these points so much affected the discussion of war aims throughout 1918, and their treatment after the armistice is so large and still unexhausted a part of subsequent history, that it may be worth while to summarize them here: these were the principal demands:

President Wilson's "Fourteen Points"

1. Open covenants of peace openly arrived at.
2. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters alike in peace and in war.
3. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers.
4. Reduction of armaments.
5. An impartial adjustment of colonial claims, with equal consideration of the equitable claims of governments and the interests of populations.
6. The evacuation of all Russian territory and general co-operation in securing to Russia freedom of political development and national policy.
7. The evacuation and restoration of Belgium.
8. The wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine to be righted.
9. A readjustment of Italian frontiers along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.
10. Autonomous development for the peoples of Austria-Hungary.
11. Evacuation of Rumania, Serbia and Montenegro: free access to the sea for Serbia: the mutual relations of the Balkan States to be determined along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality.
12. A secure sovereignty for the Turkish portions of the Ottoman Empire, autonomy and security for the other nationalities in the empire, and the opening of the Dardanelles.
13. An independent Poland including all territories of indisputably Polish population, with access to the sea.
14. A general association of nations under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

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That was the point reached by war-aims discussions at the beginning of the year which was to bring victory, and to put to the test of practice the professions of the victors. It may seem that in a nation where impatience of prolonged fighting extended from the Conservative peer who knew most about foreign politics to the Labour representatives official and unofficial, passing by the most expressive and not least brave of the younger fighting men, that in such a nation it was impossible that the will to victory should be kept alive. But the appearance of lassitude enormously exaggerated the reality. In October an independent Labour candidate had won a working-class constituency on a platform of which two main planks were the vigorous prosecution of the war and the institution of air-raid reprisals. Lord Lansdowne's letter had done very little to strengthen the *bourgeois* clamourers for peace. For many reasons, obvious enough, neither the physical condition nor the capacity for hope of the fighting men was what it had been two years

before. Yet they were ready enough to fight still, and a good match for any troops that could be brought against them.

So it was also with the British people. They had come into the war to defend the position which their history had given them, to be loyal to their friends, and to secure justice for Belgium and in general for everyone to whom the Central Powers had done or threatened injustice; or so they believed. These objects were costing much dearer than had been presumed, but the price had not yet reached a level that seemed excessive, and perhaps indeed the British people still conceived that there could be no such level. There was weariness enough and sadness enough, and enough suspicion that the leaders were neither intellectually nor morally at the height of the attempt: yet on the whole there was no drawing back, no weakening of the conviction that first victory must be won. And then? And then one man meant one thing and another something else, but until then most men felt that they must wait.



ZEPPELIN SHEDS AT FRIEDRICHSHAFEN



THE MENIN ROAD, WITH TANKS

From a Drawing by Ian Strang, in the Imperial War Museum.

CHAPTER X

THE MARCH (1918) DEFEAT, THE SINGLE COMMAND, AND THE FINAL VICTORY

“**L**OOKED at as a whole, 1917 has been a remarkable year”: it had indeed: and perhaps nothing about it was more remarkable than that just that epithet should have been chosen by the writer of the genial introduction to the *War Cabinet Report*. The next year was no less remarkable, and more pleasantly (though indeed its close may have seemed to bring near the end of stirring times and useful employments): it was the year of victory, and it is time that this narrative turned to the story of the war. But there remain still a few words of politics to put in before mention is made of the actual fighting or even of military arrangements, because political develop-

ments directly affected the arrival of the leadership under whose auspices the victory was won.

Mr. Lloyd George had throughout been the apostle of centralization: in the political sphere his gospel was pretty completely realized in 1917. He was the chairman of a war cabinet of five members, virtually free from administrative pre-occupations and absolutely controlling policy: administration was managed and information prepared by the heads of ministries, to whose numbers (now that they did not influence the size of the cabinets) additions were made—shipping, labour, food, pensions, air, reconstruction, national service. This

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arrangement much raised the general average of efficiency, though there were failures, as for instance at the last-mentioned ministry, which began to be useful only towards the end of 1917, after the supersession of Mr. Neville Chamberlain by Sir Auckland Geddes.

The Imperial War Cabinet

The centralizing process was playing a part in imperial affairs as well. During Mr. Asquith's premiership advantage had sometimes been taken of their presence in England to afforce the cabinet with dominion statesmen, the first person so invited being Sir Robert Borden, prime minister of Canada, in July, 1915. The new government set itself to systematize this procedure: the prime minister and one other minister of each dominion, and representatives from India, were early in 1917 invited to special meetings of the cabinet. In time the persons thus assembled split into two bodies, the prime ministers meeting with the war cabinet to direct the operations of war and settle great questions of policy, under the title of the Imperial War Cabinet; and the Imperial War Conference, consisting of other (and sometimes some of the same) dominion, and some British, ministers, discussing matters of less high and less urgent importance.

This arrangement also was useful and popular: and besides this again there was a strong and beneficent tendency to centralization as between allied authorities. From the first there had been frequent and increasing substitutions of personal meetings for other methods of negotiation: soon, and with rising speed, this practice began to take institutional form. There were occasional, and then permanent, missions to allied countries. In December, 1916, joint French-Italian-British executives were set up to control wheat and neutral shipping; others followed, till meat, fats, oils, sugar, nitrates, hides, wool, explosives, copper, and all shipping were managed in this way. These executives roughly corresponded to the emergency ministries and departments established in the United Kingdom. At the end of 1917 the work was crowned by

the creation of an inter-allied war cabinet, the Supreme War Council. This organ was created by an allied conference at Rapallo, forced to unity and energy by Caporetto and Brest-Litovsk.

France was now governed by Clemenceau, the champion of unity, energy, and *la victoire intégrale*; in spite, or perhaps partly because, of the misfortunes of the period when Haig was directed to attend to the instructions of Nivelle, the British prime minister was convinced by the last year's experience of the absolute necessity of a central direction; the Italians were hardly capable of recalcitrance, having just lost half a million men and been saved by the generalship of Foch (once again, and this time for good, the rising man of the French army) and by the luck of Lloyd George: for at the beginning of the year that man of fortune, the one necessary gift, had hatched a scheme for a joint attack upon Austria by way of Laibach. However useless at the time, this scheme was fruitful of good results, for it caused the operations section of the general staff to work out plans for the speedy transfer of half a dozen divisions to Italy, and when the emergency arose there was no more to be done but to find the divisions and to take the plans out of a drawer.

The Supreme War Council

At the end of 1917, then, the need was clear enough and the circumstances were at last propitious for some unification of the control of allied forces. The outcome of these conditions was the Rapallo agreement, which provided for a Supreme War Council, to consist of the prime minister and one other minister from each of the major Allies and to meet once a month: there was to be also a military council composed of high officers from each power and sitting permanently at Versailles, which was to receive reports from every allied army and to supply the Supreme War Council with expert information and advice: shortly afterwards a Naval War Council with similar functions was established (and in England at the same time Sir John Jellicoe was succeeded as first sea lord by Sir Rosslyn Wemyss).



AN AERIAL DUEL: THE BLIND SPOT

From the Water colour Drawing by N. G. Arnold, in the Imperial War Museum

UNITY OF CONTROL ON THE ALLIED FRONTS

On his way home from Rapallo Mr. Lloyd George delivered at Paris a speech enforcing the need for greater unity, and showing again, even now that for a year he had been at least as responsible as anyone for the conduct of the war, that attitude of the "detached and independent critic" which he was always ready to assume when it was convenient.¹ He spoke of the "incredible blunder" which lost Serbia: he believed that the tragedy of Rumania "could not have happened if there had been some central authority whose responsibility was to think out the problem of war for the whole battlefield": he came to 1917: "I wish there had been some variety in the character of the tragedy. But there has been the same disaster due to the same cause. Russia collapsed. Italy was menaced. The business of Russia was to look after her own front. It is the concern of Italy to look after her own war. . . . Disastrous! Fatal! . . . At this moment the extent to which we can prevent this defeat from developing into catastrophe depends upon the promptitude and completeness with which we break with our past, and for the first time realize in action the essential unity of all the allied fronts. That is the meaning of this superior council. If I am right in my conjectures, then this council will be given real power, the efforts of the Allies will be co-ordinated and victory will await valour."

The prime minister was not justified in his conjectures: perhaps the Supreme War Council was by nature inept for the service which he hoped from it: certainly it did not perform that service, though the wreckage of its military board together with the wreckage of the older system of conversations between two equal commanders-in-chief provided the fuel which hatched the phoenix of victory: the torch was put to the pyre by the German attempt, so nearly successful, to break through between the French and British armies.

Mr. Lloyd George was himself at this time opposed to the device of securing unity by the appointment of a generalissimo (and so were Mr. Asquith and so many others as to make it hopeless): yet something had

to be done, and the Supreme War Council, which met for the third time on January 30th, decided what it should be. A general reserve was to be formed of divisions earmarked for the purpose by the French, British, and Italian commanders-in-chief: the Versailles Military Board, under the presidency of Foch, was to settle how it should be composed, where it should be



SIR ROSSLYN WEMYSS (AFTERWARDS LORD WESTER WEMYSS)

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

stationed, and in emergency to decide when it should be used and who should use it, for it was to go into battle under the commander-in-chief to whose assistance it was sent by Foch and his colleagues.

The contemplated reserve never came into existence, but it nevertheless deserves some discussion because it had two important military results—it led to the resignation of Sir William Robertson, and was another step in the process by which Foch became the inevitable man to be generalissimo when a generalissimo should be wanted.

Sir William Robertson was dissatisfied with his government's provisions for reinforcing the army in France, and particularly with his failure to induce the transfer to that

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FIELD-MARSHAL SIR HENRY WILSON

From a Photograph by Central News, Limited.

theatre of divisions from the Near East: he disapproved, besides, of the Versailles arrangements for directing strategy, so much that he could consider accepting them only if he were to be, in right of his position as chief of the imperial general staff, British representative on the military board, to which office Sir Henry Wilson (who was more congenial both to Mr. Lloyd George and to the French higher command) had been appointed. He was offered the alternative—either to remain chief of staff or to become military representative: on February 16th,

finding the alternative unsatisfactory, he resigned.

The Supreme War Council had accepted the principle, forced upon it not without difficulty by the British prime minister, of an attempt to knock out Turkey as supplementary to the unavoidable defensive campaign in France, but on condition that no troops were moved from France for the subsidiary operation. Even so Sir Douglas Haig awaited Ludendorff's initiative with great anxiety. It had long been an occasion for reproach that the British held a disproportionately short front: the disproportion was, in fact, very much less than appeared: of miles of front which was really fighting front the British held their full share, they engaged their fair quota of the fighting force of Germany, and moreover almost all the ground they held was of especial strategical importance, leaving no room for withdrawal without the most lamentable consequences. Nevertheless, after discussions which had lasted for months, it was finally decided that Haig should take over a longer front, and he began the campaigning season of 1918 responsible for twenty-eight

miles more than in the previous year.

The forces with which he was to perform the larger task had not been correspondingly increased, but on the contrary reduced, so that in March, 1918, the men available for duty in the trenches were 180,000 fewer than a year before. One result was that, reinforcements being insufficient to keep formations up to strength, three battalions in each division were broken up in order to maintain the establishments of the other ten—a process which at a very critical time created new difficulties of organization and

THE GERMAN SPRING OFFENSIVE OF 1918

tactical handling. Moreover, G.H.Q. believed that the right wing of the British front was destined in the early spring to bear the brunt of a great German offensive, the greatest that the western theatre had yet seen, and it was calculated that the Germans would have a superiority of 300,000 rifles. In these circumstances Haig and Robertson pressed hard for reinforcements; but they were unsuccessful: the most they obtained, with French assistance, was an agreement that Mr. Lloyd George's favourite project of knocking out Turkey should not involve the diversion to the East of any more troops. But troops were not brought back from the East, conscription was not applied to Ireland, every available man in England was not sent over to France.²

Haig's problem therefore was, with the forces he had, to make the line safe all the way down to the Oise: he may be forgiven for having thought that he had no more than enough men for the job. Accordingly he decided that he could not spare the divisions which he was to have put at the disposal of the Versailles military board, and for which he did not receive the official request till the end of February. Pétain appears to have made the same decision,³ and in effect the projected general reserve never came into existence, except in so far as the eleven British and French divisions in Italy were still controlled from Versailles.

Still, it was evident that to meet the expected blow some improved arrangement for Anglo-French co-operation was necessary. Haig rightly believed, on the information of his admirable intelligence branch, that the main attack would be on his line, and on the right of it: Pétain wrongly, however pardonably, maintained that it would

fall on the French left wing. Therefore neither would release any part of his force to act as reserve to the other, but it was agreed between them that either should come to the other's assistance in case of need. The details of the scheme (for it had details, and was indeed the outcome of a series of staff conversations) are obscure, nor, for the purpose in hand, do they merit prolonged inquiry: the one thing certain, and the one thing that matters, about the scheme is its complete failure.

To allege incompetent generalship as the



MARSHAL FOCH

From a Photograph by Central News, Limited.

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explanation of every defeat presents little difficulty and some consolation: in March, 1918, the British people suffered a defeat which was of all its defeats the greatest in human and material cost, and which came dreadfully near to being the greatest in political consequences as well. The present writer has neither the attainments nor the obligation to decide which generals were incompetent, to what extent, and with what results, nor indeed to determine whether the fault were not in the generals but in the conditions under which they had to work. It is relevant and important, however, to show (what I believe to be the truth) that the fault was a fault in the command.

Causes of the Allied Failure

Between the beginning of the March offensive and the end of the war the British army in France was reinforced by over 700,000 men, of whom very nearly half arrived in the first month. If this reinforcement or any very considerable portion of it had been received before the battle instead of after, it is clearly improbable that there would have been any defeat, almost inconceivable that there would have been a defeat on any such scale. Reinforcements did not arrive sooner for three reasons; first, the government, in which incomparably the chief person was Mr. Lloyd George, set a high value on the operations in the Near East, especially Palestine; secondly, and much more important, it was of opinion that it was not worth while to attempt to find in the British Isles any large additional number of men for the army in France, holding (with good reason) that in Ireland there were no men worth fetching, and (with less reason) that in Great Britain any more drastic wielding of the conscriptionist rake would produce less reinforcement than discontent (even, perhaps to the point of revolution) and dislocation, industrial and agricultural; thirdly, it reckoned that with the forces already at their disposal Haig and Pétain ought to be able to do all that it required of them, that is, contain the German forces for a year, by which time Americans should have arrived in numbers

enough to make it possible to strike for the decisive victory.

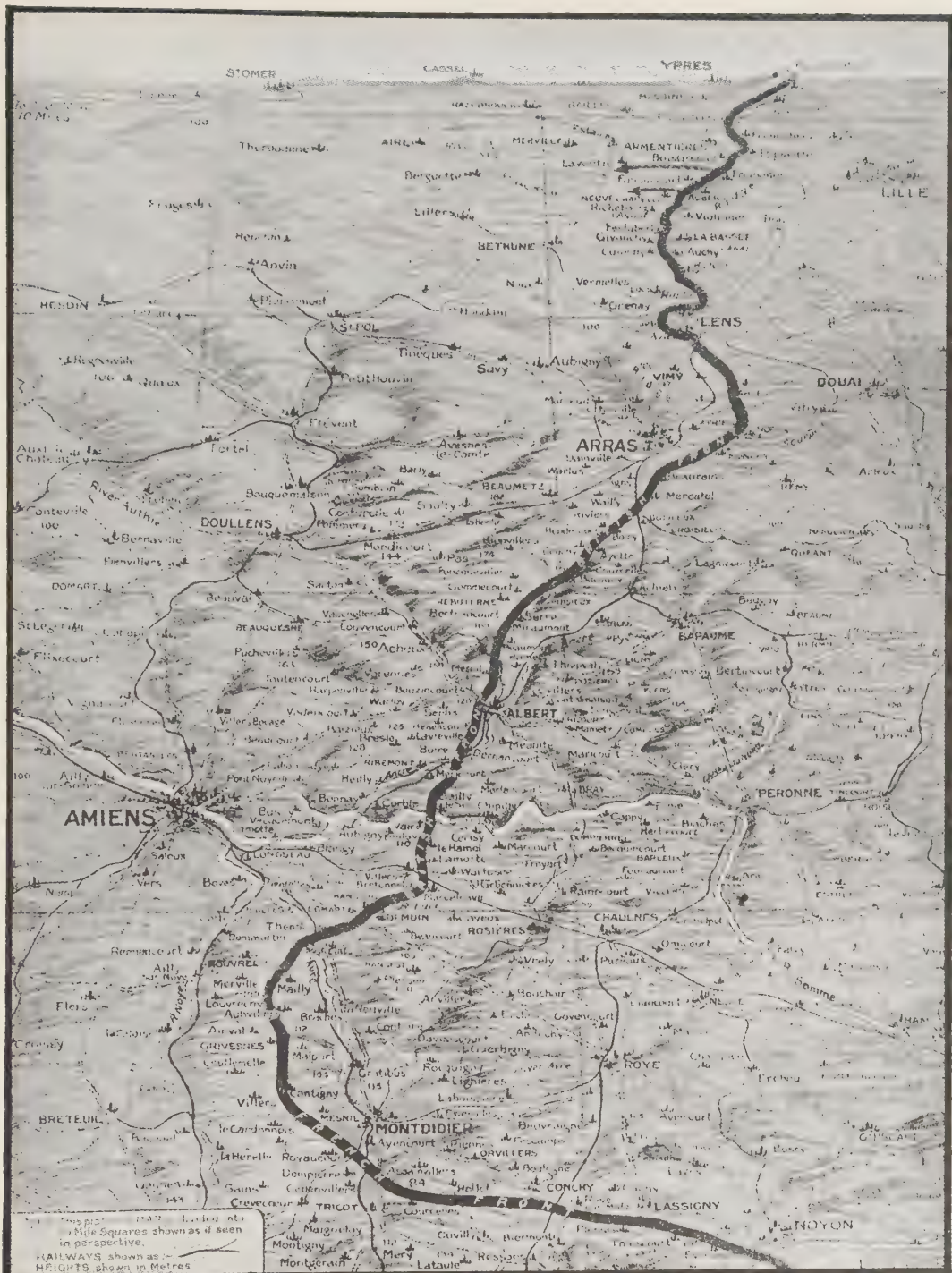
Evidently there was an error in each of these three calculations, and those who held these errors, especially Mr. Lloyd George, must therefore bear a share of responsibility for what ensued: but there is an at least equal share for the higher command if it be true that, even allowing for the falsity of the first two calculations, yet the third was vitiated only, or decisively, by the military leadership: and this conclusion it is difficult to escape.

Generalship of 1917 and 1918

In the spring of 1917, on the eve of the Nivelle offensive, the allied superiority on the western front amounted to 600,000 men and 5,000 guns:⁴ now the German superiority was something like half that number of men and little if anything in the way of guns, certainly less than nothing in tanks and aeroplanes: and even though Nivelle were a singularly incompetent or unfortunate commander, yet every other allied commander had had more or less of numerical superiority, and though none had done so ill as he, yet none had come near to a great break-through. If then Nivelle could produce only the most negative results, the others only the most fractional positive ones, why should Ludendorff be able to do anything positive and decisive? It could be only because of some failure of the men or of some failure of the command.

Some of the champions of G.H.Q. have not hesitated to suggest that the failure was in the men. Not all the defenders of the western front, it is pointed out, were British; the Germans had many divisions fully trained, but almost wholly fresh because they came from the *dolce far niente* of Russia; they still had in Russia a considerable reservoir of troops, and in fact, in the three months, March, April, May, brought sixteen divisions thence.

These arguments do not seem to have much weight: no one would assert that Portuguese divisions were worth as much as, for instance, Scottish, but it would be dangerous to presume that the French and Belgian divisions were not; and if it is



MAP SHOWING THE BATTLE-FRONT WHEN THE GERMANS OPENED THEIR
SPRING OFFENSIVE IN 1918

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meant that the difficulty of securing co-operation between staffs of different nationalities may be fatal and had not been surmounted, then the case is given away.

The average British fighting man had not in March, 1918, the reserves, moral and physical, on which he had been able to call two years sooner: one reason for this

to argue from this that our enemies had on the whole any personal advantage, for after all Russia had not always been a rest-cure and in France for years the Allies had habitually held the numerical superiority and the tactical initiative, so that if the German army had not been the greater sufferer, both in the proportion of the



BRITISH TRENCHES BEFORE RHEIMS, MAY, 1918

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

was the higher command's inability so to organize reinforcements that a man could be sure of fighting always with the battalion to which he was accustomed; for, though most men may love their country more than their battalion, very few Englishmen acted as if they did: but no one has suggested that the British soldier was not in the spring of 1918, man for man, a good match for his enemies, and no one is likely to suggest it. Certainly the Germans had, thanks to their Russian windfall, fresh divisions to bring up, and the British and French had not: but it would be absurd

casualties and in the exhaustion of the survivors, it spoke ill for allied leadership. In fact the *moral* of the German army had suffered severely. Ludendorff asserts that "the army had thrown off the depressing effects of the previous year's fighting in the knowledge that it was passing from the defence to the attack. Its *moral* appeared completely restored": but there is evidence that his optimism was excessive.⁵

The German army had this great disadvantage, too, that it rested on a country more over-burdened and under-nourished than was England or France. Ludendorff's



THE ROAD FROM ARRAS TO BAPAUME

From the Painting by C. R. W. Nevinson, in the Imperial War Museum.

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suggestion that propaganda, foreign and seditious, disrupted the German people and then the German army does not deserve consideration. In war the effects of causes material, moral, military, political, economic, and intellectual can be neither easily nor precisely distinguished; but nothing is more certain than that throughout the sentiments and actions of the German population were decided mainly by the doings and sufferings of the German army: pessimism was the child, not the parent, of defeat. Yet it is evident that the deficiencies and fatigues of the people at home were a weakness to the soldiers in the field, a weakness which was serious whenever the fighting men began to feel that their efforts were useless.

Lastly, it is true that when the German commanders began their great stroke for victory they still had more reinforcements to call upon, but that reserve was small and definite and there was no more behind it. The British, on the other hand, had fewer divisions which they could hurry up from other theatres: but then they had a larger proportion of line-of-communication troops, a much larger stock of individual recruits, and behind them, if time could be gained, the Americans.

It seems, then, that the preponderance with which Germany began the March offensive was not enough to promise her a great success unless she had also some superiority in leadership: it does not necessarily follow that either Hindenburg or Ludendorff was superior to either Haig or Pétain: perhaps the advantage of a unified control was enough to give them that superiority which so nearly proved decisive.

Haig's Anticipations Realized

So far as the work of the intelligence section went, G.H.Q. did as well as is humanly possible and a good deal better than the French; Haig rightly believed that the main weight of attack would fall on his right wing and that it was to be expected towards the end of March: as the time approached, indeed, he was able to predict almost the hour of the onslaught.

Yet, when it came, Gough's Fifth Army of seventeen divisions, and Byng's Third of

fifteen, had to meet the one forty and the other twenty-four divisions⁶: they failed to hold them, and it was only in the nick of time and with some help from the French, and with more heroism and heavier losses than any commander has a right to reckon on, that the breach was stopped before it had fatally shattered the western front.

Reasons for the British Failure

How was it, if G.H.Q. knew so well when and where the attack was coming, that yet there were at that time and place forces so inadequate to repel it? It was partly that the British commander, keenly aware that his room for manœuvre grew narrower and narrower as his line went north, felt that the southernmost part was the least vital though it was the most threatened; partly that it was reckoned that the Oise valley, usually marshy, would be impassable to the enemy, though it happened, after an exceptionally dry winter, not to be marshy at all, and so proved no obstacle; partly that subordinate staffs were not always infallible; partly that the defences of the ground taken over by the Fifth Army had been very imperfect and that there had not been time to strengthen them sufficiently; partly that the arrangements for French co-operation, if they were not essentially bad, at any rate broke down before the French high command's refusal, till too late, to be convinced that it really was the main assault with which the British were dealing; partly the sheer accident of war, the mist that so much helped the Germans on the first day of the battle, for instance, and the failure of the French to provide for the blowing up of the bridges for whose destruction they were responsible.

On March 21st our battle positions were penetrated on the extreme right: the next evening Gough, having used all his reserves and received but one French division, decided to fall back on the Somme; but, in consequence of the weakness of the defences and of a gap in our line which occurred near Ham during the night retreat, by the night of the 23rd the Somme line was already in German hands.⁷ By the 26th the danger of the enemy's reaching Amiens and cutting

UNIFICATION OF COMMAND IN FRANCE

off the British from the French army was very near: Haig had sent his last reserves to the danger-point, and it was doubtful whether he could expect help from Pétain, who had resolved, indeed, naturally pre-occupied with the safety of Paris, to move south-westwards the French troops who had come up into the old Fifth Army area.

Foch Appointed Generalissimo

Of this decision Pétain had informed Haig on the evening of the 24th⁸: Haig believed that the result of putting it into effect would be to lose the battle, and probably the war: he therefore telegraphed to the chief of the imperial general staff (Sir Henry Wilson) to come out and arrange the appointment of a single commander for the western front, and at the same time wrote to Clemenceau and Foch his opinion that the French and British armies would be separated, and the German strategical object reached, unless at once twenty divisions were concentrated on the Somme west of Amiens. On the 25th, Lord Milner, Sir Douglas Haig, and Sir Henry Wilson agreed that the proper course was to appoint Foch generalissimo: the next day they met Poincaré, Clemenceau, Foch, and Pétain, and the thing was done. The official formula was, "General Foch is charged by the British and French governments to co-ordinate the action of the allied armies on the western front. He will make arrangements to this effect with the two commanders-in-chief, who are requested to furnish him with all necessary information." Later this formula was strengthened, but it was effective from the first.

Before the unification of command could be much more than nominal (except in the vital matter of preventing the French withdrawal south-west), events had already decided that the Germans were not to attain their whole strategical objective: their failure was due partly to the tenacity of British soldiers, partly to the fatigue of their own men who were too weary to press the advance, partly to the arrival of French reserves, partly to the heartening effect of Foch's appointment, and partly to the great success of General Horne against the Arras attack of March 28th.

But it was still possible that Amiens might fall, and it was not safe till a week later: it is of April 4th that Ludendorff writes: "It was an established fact that the enemy's resistance was beyond our strength. We must not get drawn into a battle of exhaustion. This would accord neither with the strategical nor the tactical situation. In agreement with the commanders concerned, G.H.Q. had to take the extremely difficult decision to abandon the attack on Amiens for good."

The Allies were saved from destruction but they had suffered a great defeat: the British alone in five weeks had 300,000 casualties, nearly twice as many as in the whole Dardanelles campaign: and though at the end of the battle the Allies were in some respects stronger than at the beginning—by the British emergency measures about reinforcement, the raising of the age limit, the dropping of the invasion precautions, the recall of troops from the East, and by Clemenceau's and Lloyd George's successful appeal to President Wilson to allow American divisions to be broken up and the elements hurried to the front—yet something similar was true of the Germans also: they too had greater numbers at the end than at the beginning: they had not lost the initiative, they were still capable of great attacks, as they showed on the Lys.

Ludendorff's Misgivings

Yet any reader of Ludendorff's book must feel that after May 4th he had really lost hope, to whatever spasms of optimism he may have forced himself later: he thought the strategical situation by no means favourable, he perceived special tactical difficulties, he complained of the stupid and unsatisfactory way in which the lightly wounded hurried to the rear. Rather later, though with much less definition, the same feelings spread among the German people: now if ever, it had been thought, the decisive victory was to come, and it had not come: the Reichstag, which had been moving steadily back to annexationism, hurriedly began to move the other way again. And towards the end of April both the high command and public opinion were conscious

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that there were still further reasons for disquiet: Ludendorff noted "the fact that certain divisions had obviously failed to show any inclination to attack in the valley of the Lys. . . . The way in which troops stopped round captured food-supplies. . . . The absence of our old peace-trained corps

but in the popular mind there was an unreasoned belief that the year would see the end of the war and that no British war could end without a British victory, just at the time when among the German people the belief was becoming dominant that the war could not be suffered to continue



ARRAS IN FLAMES

From the Drawing by R. Borslase Smart, in the Imperial War Museum.

of officers. . . .": and the people began to fear that the "bread-peace" in the East was going to produce no bread.

The response of the British people to the great defeat was admirable: there was very little despair, certainly no increase of defeatist propaganda, and on the whole very little recrimination: industrial unrest was stilled (though in June it was again to become threatening, but not more than threatening): among persons in authority there were many who came to the conviction that victory was still a very long way off, and some who gave up all hope of it,

beyond the year and that any end would be better than none.

On the other hand, neither the government nor the high command had improved its credit with the people: it would be a great exaggeration to say that confidence in either disappeared, but certainly confidence in both diminished. This diminution of confidence was intensified by several unpleasant incidents of a politico-military sort, especially two, the one a little before and the other a little after the great spring battle. The first was the conviction on February 21st of the editor and military



THE LENS-ARRAS ROAD

Looking on to Vimy Village, Lens and Montigny.

From the Painting by Sir H. Hughes-Stanton, R.A., in the Imperial War Museum.

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correspondent of the *Morning Post* for a breach of the censorship regulations under the Defence of the Realm Act, the latter having written and the former having inserted, in spite of the censor's warning, an account of the recent meeting of the Supreme War Council, with the decision to stand on the defensive in France and to attack in Palestine.

The Press and the Government

Even if it be true that this article gave no information to the enemy, and that both the writer and the editor had none but patriotic motives, yet their action was disquieting. It had long been an open secret that the writer was on very confidential terms with Sir William Robertson, and had been supposed that he used information supplied by the chief of the imperial general staff to preach in the press the strategical and political gospel of which the chief of the imperial general staff approved: he has explained, but without convincing all his readers, that on this particular occasion his information came from the French prime minister: certainly throughout the war a great many people, British and foreign, besides Sir William Robertson told him a great many things they had better not have told him: the mischief was the same. If a journalist, whose motives might on this occasion be patriotic and his calculations of his country's interest correct, but of whom there was no certainty that he was incapable of ignoble sentiments and pernicious actions—if such a person could employ State secrets to drive policy and administration in a direction chosen by soldiers, then responsible government was impossible. Even if he were on this occasion so clearly right, or so apparently right, that honourable men judged it necessary to co-operate with him, that was no defence for his relations with highly placed soldiers nor for his conduct in general, nor was it any consolation to the public, to whom it meant only that the government, as well as distinguished journalists and senior generals, was not always trustworthy.

The relations of government, soldiers, and newspapers continued to be troublesome.

A House of Commons far from its election and raised above dread of dissolution had lost influence in the country: the press fell heir to much of this influence, and more besides. Now there were bitter complaints that Mr. Lloyd George governed much more by the press than by parliament. His assertion that the ownership of newspapers could not be regarded as a disqualification for office seemed an enormous understatement when three newspaper owners held high posts, one of them with no particular qualifications and no particular results except the antagonizing of the best of his subordinates.

The Case of General Maurice

On May 7th most of the daily papers contained a letter from Sir Frederick Maurice, director of military operations at the war office, denouncing as false a series of statements made by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Lloyd George: these statements were, that the extension of the British front was not dealt with at the Versailles war council; that the army in France was considerably stronger on the first day of 1918 than on the first day of 1917; and that in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Palestine there were only three white divisions: the writer further alleged that he was "by descent and connexion as sincere a democrat as the prime minister," that the last thing he desired was government by soldiers, but that the statements quoted were known by many soldiers to be false and that the consequent distrust of the government must impair "the splendid *moral* of our troops," and that therefore he thought it his duty to publish his denials "in the hope that parliament may see fit to order an investigation into the statements I have made."

The next day, in reply to Mr. Asquith, Mr. Bonar Law announced that "the question of military discipline involved in the writing of such a letter" was "being dealt with by the Army Council in the ordinary way," and that though "government could not be carried on if an inquiry into the conduct of ministers should be considered necessary whenever their action is challenged by a servant of the government who has occupied

THE GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL MAURICE

a position of the highest confidence, yet, inasmuch as these allegations affect the honour of ministers, the government proposes to invite two of His Majesty's judges to act as a Court of Honour to inquire into the charge of misstatements alleged to have been made by ministers and to report as quickly as possible."

Mr. Asquith was not satisfied with this

takable manner.⁹ If Mr. Lloyd George could make something of a debating answer to General Maurice, still there was little doubt (and now there is less) that the general was nearer the truth than the minister. Mr. Lloyd George's decisions might all have been right, or at least pardonable: it appeared that his statements had not always contained all the truth: in effect



THE MOLE, ZEEBRUGGE, SHOWING ONE OF THE BIG GUN DEFENCES

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

suggestion, but moved the appointment of a parliamentary committee of inquiry. The government not only resisted this motion but also withdrew its offer of a judicial committee: in this course it had no difficulty, relying on the prime minister's debating powers and, much more, on the disciplinary effect of making the matter one of confidence.

But if the government remained, it was not unaffected. What the *Times* called "the growing distrust of all official statements (whether by generals or by ministers) and his (Mr. Lloyd George's) own incurable habit of protesting too much" had been emphasized in the most public and unmis-

the House of Commons (and probably, though it is less easy to test, the country too) decided that, whether he was absolutely reliable or not, he was the only possible premier. The moral quality for which Mr. Lloyd George was kept in his position was energy, and the intellectual one, agility: of a disinterested devotion to truth and uprightness few of his opponents and not all of his supporters thought him capable. These judgments on Mr. Lloyd George were profoundly to affect the British people, and the Maurice incident was a notable step in their formation.

One or two other aspects of that incident

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require some attention. Whether General Maurice's action was either morally or intellectually admirable does not much matter; quite evidently it was officially intolerable: it had no meaning unless it were an attempt by a confidential servant of the Crown to use information acquired under an obligation of secrecy as an inducement to parliament and people to upset the ministry: at the best it was a revolutionary expedient,

There the spring of 1918 may be left, after a reminder of its one bright spot in the feats of the Dover Patrol at Ostend and Zeebrugge; and as shortly as possible the steps must be indicated by which the holding of the German attack was developed into the defeat of Germany.

After the Lys, Ludendorff still continued his attempts to force a decision, in a series of operations which may be reduced to three



VINDICTIVE ALONGSIDE THE PIER AT OSTEND

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whose failure meant inevitable punishment. Comparisons have often been made between the political ventures of Sir Frederick Maurice and of Lord French: the one was followed by dismissal, the other by a viscounty, an endowment of £50,000, and a great political office. The reader may be left to judge whether the two ventures were similar and, if so, which was the appropriate result.

In the critical division ninety-nine Liberals supported Mr. Asquith: here also is a notable monument, a monument in the record of the process by which the historic Liberal party was divided into two factions, Lloyd Georgian and Asquithian, separated by as much personal animosity and moral reprobation as any two parties in the State.

battles, the third battle of the Aisne beginning on May 27th, the battle of Lassigny on June 9th, and the second battle of the Marne on July 15th. The first of these attacks won great successes, took the Chemin des Dames and Soissons and Château-Thierry and threatened Paris itself; but it was not successful enough. The last offensive was definitely held on its second day, and on July 18th Foch began the great series of counter-attacks which were to finish the war.

It is clear that most of the credit for the leadership which stopped the German onslaught and initiated the victorious counter-measures must be given to Foch: he was both the responsible commander and the representative figure of those feats of arms.



THE BREACH IN THE MOLE AT ZEEBRUGGE CAUSED BY THE EXPLOSION OF SUBMARINE C3



IPHIGENIA AND INTREPID BLOCKING THE CANAL AT ZEEBRUGGE

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It is equally clear that the British commander was only less important—how much less, military historians must decide. The single command did not prove a magical device, nor did the civilian government always give it the most judicious support. It had

day of August, when the attack on the Hindenburg Line was impending, the war cabinet sent the commander-in-chief a “personal” telegram which indicated that it would become anxious if severe casualties were incurred in the attack.¹⁰ In truth,



GERMAN HEADQUARTERS AT SPA AT THE TIME OF THE ARMISTICE, NOVEMBER, 1918

The German car is flying the white flag.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

been arranged that Sir Douglas Haig should have the right of appeal to his government whenever he felt that the generalissimo was making excessive demands upon him. Not content with this safeguard, in the middle of July, when the French army was in imminent danger and Foch had asked Haig for help, the cabinet sent out General Smuts to G.H.Q. to inquire whether it was advisable that the government should intervene between the generals. Again, on the last

there can never be an absolute unity of command when two great nations are fighting together, and least of all when one of the governments concerned has a far from absolute confidence in its own commander. Yet the subordination of Haig to Foch was associated (and it can hardly have been by chance) with victory, while the memory of the partnership of Haig and Pétain recalls inevitably defeat: not least of the causes of the success of the later



THE GRAND HÔTEL BRITANNIQUE, SPA

Where sittings of the International Armistice Commission were held, November, 1918.

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arrangement was the loyalty and steadfastness of Haig in a situation as trying as could be, responsible, to a government which he did not trust and which did not trust him, for an army which he had to use according to the directions of a foreign commander.

Ludendorff's Forlorn Hope

Somehow, at any rate, the thing was done. Even as early as June, Ludendorff¹¹ perceived that "not only had our March superiority been cancelled, but also the difference in gross numbers was now to our disadvantage . . . new American reinforcements could release English and French divisions on quiet sectors . . . for this reason America became the deciding factor in the war." Still he thought that in the last battle his men "had shown themselves in all essentials superior to the enemy, as long as they were handled carefully"; he determined to try the offensive once more, partly because, although "the battalion strength had been reduced, it was still high enough to allow us to strike one more blow that should make the enemy ready for peace," partly because, "quite apart from the bad influence it would have on our allies, I was afraid that the army would find defensive battles an even greater strain than offensive." It was a forlorn hope, a neck-or-nothing venture, if ever there was one.

It seems even that Ludendorff had been deceived about the spirit of his men: when he inquired into the reasons for the failure on July 18th, he learned that "the men had ceased to believe in the possibility of an attack." A few days later in the Reichstag the foreign secretary, with the approval of the majority, declared that "an absolute end can hardly be expected through purely military decisions alone." But the Allies continued to fight for such an end, with more and more success and on a greater and greater number of battle-fields, as the summer and autumn wore on. The autumn, indeed, was not far advanced before the military facts began to have diplomatic results.

The first was on September 15th; the

Austro-Hungarian note¹² which invited all belligerents "to a confidential and non-binding discussion on basic principles for the conclusion of peace, in a place in a neutral country and at a near date." The Austrian Empire had for months been publicly advertising and privately endeavouring to satisfy its need of peace. In June it had seen its very existence threatened by the allied declarations in favour of Poles and Czechoslovaks and Yugo-Slavs. Yet even now its offers received no pleasing response: the American government replied that it had "repeatedly and with entire candour stated the terms upon which the United States would consider peace, and can and will entertain no proposal for conference upon a matter concerning which it has made its position and purpose so plain."

The next step was the defection of Bulgaria, which state was granted an armistice at the end of September: by that time, too, it was clear that Austria and Turkey must drop out soon, and indeed no less clear to governing persons in Germany that her effort too was finished. August 8th had, even for Ludendorff, marked the decline of her military power and destroyed all hope. There was no more resistance left: revived hopes, in the generals and in others, were never again more than the most fleeting and unsubstantial of delusions.

Germany's Appeal to President Wilson

On October 5th the German government, hastily "parliamentarized" for the occasion, requested "the President of the United States of America to take in hand the restoration of peace, acquaint all belligerent states with this request, and invite them to send plenipotentiaries for the purpose of opening negotiations. It accepts the programme set forth by the President of the United States in his message to Congress of January 8." On the 8th the president replied with a demand for the evacuation of occupied territories as a preliminary to the cessation of arms, and with two questions: did the imperial chancellor accept the terms laid down by the president on January 8th and later occasions as merely requiring practical appli-

THE ARMISTICE NEGOTIATIONS

cation? and was he "speaking merely for the constituted authorities of the empire?" By the time this document was received the German government had the most urgent motives for haste: there were already premonitions of revolution. On the 12th the foreign secretary told the president that

assertion of the necessity for destroying the power by which she had hitherto been controlled, and a demand for absolute guarantees of the present military supremacy of the United States and the Allies. On the 20th he was assured that his allegations of inhumanity were mistaken, and that the



THE CHIEF ALLIED MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ARMISTICE COMMISSION AT SPA
Left to right: General Haking (British), General Rhodes (American), General Nudan (French).

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

Germany accepted his terms as merely requiring application; that she believed the associated governments to have adopted the same position; that she accepted the necessity of evacuation; and that the chancellor, supported by the majority of the Reichstag, spoke in the name of the German government and people.

On October 14th the president replied once more: his main points were a reprimand of the inhuman wickedness of Germany, and

German government was already democratized: he replied on the 23rd that he was consulting the associated powers as to armistice terms, and that if it was a question of dealing with "the military masters and the monarchical autocrats of Germany" he "must demand not peace negotiations but surrender": the German higher command found this last note intolerable, and Ludendorff, unable to persuade his government to break off negotiations, resigned; a resigna-

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tion which lent some additional force to the German note of October 27th, awaiting "the proposals for an armistice which will introduce a peace of justice such as the President in his manifestations has described," and protesting that the "peace negotiations will be conducted by a People's government, in whose hands the decisive legal power rests in accordance with the Constitution, and to which the Military Power will also be subject." On the same day the Kaiser was informed by the Austrian Emperor that he intended to ask at once for an immediate armistice and a separate peace; on the next began the naval mutiny which was the first and the most forceful act of the German revolution.

So far none of the Allies had taken any part in the negotiations: on November 5th they communicated to Mr. Wilson, and

he to Germany, their willingness "to make peace . . . on the terms of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress of January 8," except that they must "reserve to themselves complete freedom on this subject" (the freedom of the seas), and that, under the president's demand for the restoration of invaded territories, "they understand that compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian populations of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air."

That was the end of the diplomacy of the war: on November 11th an armistice was signed which made the German army and navy quite impotent: the war was over, and there was nothing left to do but to make peace.



ARMISTICE DAY IN LONDON
Scene outside Buckingham Palace

From a Photograph by Alfieri.



LONDON IN WAR-TIME: KENSINGTON PALACE AND ALLOTMENTS

From a Water-colour Drawing by Henry Rushbury, in the Imperial War Museum.

CHAPTER XI

THE GENERAL ELECTION AND THE PEACE CONFERENCE

IT was not easy to make peace, either at home or abroad: for most of the fighting men and for most of those who loved them the mere cessation of fighting seemed at first heaven enough: but even after years of conscription those classes hardly formed the larger part, and were far from forming the busiest or the noisiest part, of the community: nor even for them could the mere absence of fear and pain long suffice.

The government had for months been making it clear by its actions, and hastened now to make it clear by its promises, that the task of repairing the ravages of war, whether or not it was above its powers, was at any rate far below its ambitions: even while it was engaged in the business of war it had found it possible to spare some

of its attention for social and political activities, not only those which forced themselves upon it, but others also which it might very easily, and quite properly, have postponed. Of these works, some of obligation and some of supererogation, there are a few which require mention before any attempt is made to indicate the condition of the British people in the months after the war.

There was the great question of the national economic policy: in the last century nothing had aroused more passionate controversy than this. Now it was again forced upon the government: partly because war quickened nationalism and imperialism, partly because it revealed the extreme inconvenience of depending upon potential enemies for indispensable commodities, partly because it exploded the

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LONDON IN WAR-TIME: TRAFALGAR SQUARE, OCTOBER, 1918

War Savings campaign: "Feed the Guns."

From a Water-colour Drawing by Henry Rushbury, in the Imperial War Museum.

last remnants of *laissez faire*, partly because the cabinet was now largely occupied by men of protectionist inclinations, partly because manufacturers enjoying the protective effects of war thought it reasonable that these advantages should be made permanent, partly because as hostilities continued the dislike and distrust of Germany increased, and concurrently the tendency to look forward to some commercial arrangement which should exclude the Germans or at least put them in a position of inferiority. These and similar causes produced phenomena like the oratorical campaign of the Australian prime minister, Mr. Hughes, the Paris Resolutions of 1916,¹ blasphemies against the pure gospel of Manchester from disciples hitherto so loyal as Mr. Asquith, Mr. McKenna, and Mr. Runciman. What exactly all this was to come to was not very clear, but it was clear that there

was again urgency in a question which more than once before had provided the principal occupation of British political parties, and that if many people were propounding different solutions at least most people desired some new solution—protection for essential industries, imperial free trade, preference for allies, exclusion of Germans from the exploitation of British resources: there was hardly any variation from free trade that was not recommended, and hardly anyone who was not prepared to accept some variation.

Another political question of the first magnitude which was forced on the government was the claim of Labour (as represented by an alliance of trade union officials and Socialist propagandists) to control the community. Before the war organized Labour had attained a privileged position in the State, and it looked forward—conscious that

THE LABOUR PARTY AND POST-WAR PROBLEMS

it was looking a long way forward—to obtaining control. The war increased its industrial power and gave it a share, small and not of right, in the government: in the course of 1918 it was resolved to rest content with nothing less than full control.

In January, 1919, the Labour Party Conference had been with difficulty persuaded to sanction the continuance of its representatives in office. In June its first annual meeting under its new constitution refused all the appeals of the Labour ministers and decided that the existence of the political truce should be no longer recognized (though in the event the Labour ministers did not immediately resign): the meeting also demanded that output should be increased by the elimination of inefficiency and waste, that for the prevention of unemployment a ten years' programme of government works should be prepared, that trade union conditions should be re-established after the

war, that the poor-law should be abolished, education nationalized, wealth conscripted, and a national housing scheme adopted. Of these demands the first was agreeable to everyone, the third had been promised dozens of times, and for the last the government had already bound itself to give financial assistance. To them should be added the Trade Union Congress's reaffirmation (on September 4th) that the holding of an International Labour and Socialist Conference was an essential preliminary to peace, its insistence that there must be Labour representation at the peace conference, and its belief that the Socialist International was the safest guarantee for future peace.

Besides these warnings that the coalition must expect no Labour co-operation in the tasks of peace-making and reconstruction, there were now signs enough of increasing difficulty in keeping the social machinery



LONDON IN WAR-TIME: "WASHINGTON INN," ST. JAMES'S SQUARE

From a Water-colour Drawing by Henry Rushbury, in the Imperial War Museum.

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going in face of the discontent of the wage-earners and the capacity for disturbance possessed by their organizations. The March offensive had put a stop to strikes, but in the summer and still more in the autumn they were numerous and serious: most portentous of all was the strike of the last two days of August, 1918, by which the London police wrenched from a feeble administration a considerable increase in wages, the reinstatement of one of their number who had been dismissed for trade union activities, and the institution of representative boards to provide direct communication between the men and the commissioner.

These were matters in which, if the government did not show conspicuous wisdom, at least it had not been within its power to show wisdom by not meddling at all: there were other matters where the government's action, right or wrong, anyway had not that excuse—franchise, education, India.

Franchise and Education

The Representation of the People Bill was drafted by a Speaker's conference, an extra-constitutional and irresponsible body representing the three parties. There could be no pretence that parliamentary reform had been an issue at the last election, nor that the present House of Commons, by continuing its own life for the purposes of the war, had somehow provided itself with a mandate for a great extension of the franchise. The chief effect of the act was to add to the previous constituency of 8,350,000 men 2,000,000 more men, and 6,000,000 women, of whom 5,000,000 were married. Constituencies were rearranged on the principle that each member should represent a population of 70,000. The chief argument for extending the franchise to women was, in the words of the minister responsible for the measure, that "having called upon women for so large a contribution to the work of carrying on this war, and having received so splendid a response to that call," the government could no longer "refuse to women a voice in moulding the future of the country." Another member went so far as to say that "it would have been

impossible to have carried on the war without them," apparently supposing that, war apart, society could do well enough without women: it was queer, and sad, that the women of Great Britain, having been insulted by the championship of incendiaries and maniacs, should now be insulted with a reward for having stood by their sons and lovers in days of stress. In justice it should be said that this argument was not unchallenged: Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, though in favour of women's suffrage, pointed out the fallacy with admirable realism—"Anybody who has entered intimately into the great concerns of life, the life of the home, the life of the State, the life of the citizen, must have known long ago of the magnificent part and the essential part that woman has been playing in all those spheres."

A far-reaching Education Act was also passed, receiving the royal assent in August. Its chief provisions were that all children must attend school till the age of 14, and, if they left before they were 16, for 280 hours a year until they were 18: no child under 12 might be employed at all, or over 12 except between school hours and 8 p.m.: no fees might be charged for elementary or continuation schools: there was provision for nursery schools and for physical training: local education authorities were responsible for all kinds of education, and the limit on the spending powers of higher education authorities was abolished. It was estimated that the annual cost of the act would be something over ten millions.

Government Reform in India

It was not only a great franchise and a great social reform which the government undertook: it also set itself to the momentous task of establishing for India a new system of government which should be much nearer to autonomy and which should itself be only a step towards something nearer still.

It is evident that, even when provided by the war with occupation and excitement enough, Mr. Lloyd George's government still found other adventures to attempt. Hence, if making war had not been absolutely



SCENES IN LONDON AND MANCHESTER ON THE DECLARATION OF
THE ARMISTICE, NOVEMBER 11, 1918

From Photographs by the London News Agency, and E. Hulton & Co.

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engrossing it was not likely that making peace would be so.

For the common people it was so at first. It is difficult to recall how much the

serve meals after 9.30 p.m., and places of entertainment were allowed to be open even after 10.30 p.m.; street lamps were unmasked, and the shading of lights in



A TYPICAL LONDON SCENE ON ARMISTICE DAY

From a Photograph by E. Hulton & Co.

war had altered the everyday life of the ordinary man.

The *Annual Register* for 1918 is gratified, but it is also almost shocked, at the variety of relaxations which the end of the war produced. "All recruiting was suspended; hotels, restaurants and clubs were permitted, during the week of festivities, to

houses was no longer necessary; white bread and an increased sugar ration were promised; building permits began to be granted; racing was quickly resumed; all restrictions on the publication of weather and shipping news were removed; the restrictions on the use of petrol for driving private motor-cars were relaxed; there was



THE CROWD OUTSIDE BUCKINGHAM PALACE ON ARMISTICE DAY

From a Photograph by E. Hulton & Co.

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a wonderful revival of golf; the press censorship was considerably reduced; certain trade restrictions were modified; even 'hunting appointments' reappeared in the daily papers. In the House of Commons Mr. Clynes, the food controller, declared that a more varied Christmas table might be expected than last year, with larger supplies of apples, oranges, nuts, and certain other fruits."

Effect of the Armistice

These were the things which the end of war meant to the British people: other things also, less material, the end of an anxiety, selfish or unselfish, which to almost everyone had become wellnigh intolerable, and the beginning of another anxiety about the results to be drawn from the victory so painfully gained: but this new anxiety perhaps never really mastered the majority, and certainly at first attacked only those few whose minds were incorrigibly bent towards politics. "Relaxation" is the word that dominates the period immediately after the armistice.

It was happiness then to be allowed out of bed after half-past ten. There was something paradisaical about houses, shops, and streets illuminated as if savagery and science had never been allies. To use a real match for lighting a pipe was a dissipation and an excitement innocent now but still delightfully flavoured with wickedness by the memory of recent inhibitions. There were those to whom the announcement of football games or race meetings seemed like the calling back of the golden age. For publishers and newspaper proprietors more momentous even than the easing of the censorship was the prospect that once again it might be possible to buy paper with a calculable chance of making a profit out of it. For everybody who, for business or pleasure, moved about England at all, there were the most exhilarating anticipations: the rich might once more use their motor-cars; to the less rich taxi-cabs became objects of calculation instead of matters of rather desperate hope, and sometimes they might be induced to travel as far as from Shaftesbury Avenue to Chelsea or even Hampstead.

It was possible to look forward to a time when railway journeys should be something better than weary jerkings in long-awaited trains from station to station; when fares should descend towards the statutory penny a mile; when season tickets should be sold like postage-stamps and not granted like royal charters; when Blackpool should be again accessible. Some men began to hope that London hotels would again have beds to let, and some that whisky might need watering once more. For many thousands it was bliss to be alive in a winter sure to be followed by a summer of county cricket, "and to be young was very heaven." Not fewer thousands had the simplicity to suppose that they would soon receive back the liberties which they had sacrificed to their country's needs—not so much the pretentious liberties of the arrogant, like printing and voting, or the salutary but often importunate liberties of the seditious, like public trial and the rules of evidence, as the pleasant intimate liberties of the humble, like buying chocolate after nine or beer after eleven. And then, it was to be hoped that wages would stay up, and prices come down.

Such were the material alleviations whose approach symbolized to the bulk of the British people the advent of the blessings of peace. There were some, necessarily, to whom peace meant a cessation or a diminution of opportunities of profit; but it is charitable to suppose that most of them were modest enough to be content with what they had got, or public-spirited enough to regret the interruption of their own enrichment less than they welcomed their country's triumph and Europe's reprieve: if there were any who were not so consoled, the tenderness that would pity the lion with no Christian to eat may hope that they profitably transferred their energies to controlling building materials or speculating in foreign currencies.

London's Armistice Day Celebrations

Certainly the dominant feeling was of relief, of gratitude for permission to relax a grip whose maintenance had become almost intolerable, and of joy at the prospect of a return to the comforts and diver-

PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION AFTER THE ARMISTICE

sions of 1914. This was the note of the first celebrations of the armistice. It was a very innocent emotion, to judge from the immediate results. In London there could hardly have been more disorder, in the sense that the crowds were so large and so irresponsible that they were quite beyond control: yet the excesses committed and the damage done were extremely small. A brewer's dray that turned into the Strand about noon on November 11th disappeared almost like a handful of snow thrown into a fire: young women employed at the air ministry flung out of their windows armfuls of documents which might perhaps have been put to better use: a bonfire did some harm to the base of the Nelson Column. There were hardly any improprieties more outrageous than these, very little vengefulness, very little drunkenness, almost no violence. One memorable feature of the London rejoicings on armistice day was the crowds' spontaneous and conspicuous resolve to make Buckingham Palace and the person of the king the centre of their celebrations.

Plans for Demobilization

The holiday mood could not last long. The British people had somehow to get itself going on a tolerable peace routine and also to bear its part in the rearrangement of Europe. For guidance in these enterprises it was easily persuaded to trust to the government with which it had reached victory and which boldly announced its capacity not only to perform the two indispensable tasks but to do many other fine things besides.

Parliament met on November 12th, and the government announced the plans which it had already formed for the demobilization period, of which the chief were that men should be released in equal numbers from the army at home and the army abroad, priority being given to those whose return to civil occupations was without difficulty, and that for the present unemployment should be relieved by a weekly out-of-work donation of 24s. for men and 20s. for women, with additions for dependent children.

On the same day party meetings of Liberals and Unionists decided that the

coalition should continue, and at the first the prime minister announced that there must be a new parliament as soon as possible: there also, and in a letter to the Unionist meeting, he indicated the policy on which he intended to fight the election.

Mr. Lloyd George's Programme

We should be warned by the results of 1871, and "not allow any sense of revenge, any spirit of greed, any grasping desire to override the fundamental principles of righteousness": a League of Nations was more than ever necessary, to prevent the Balkanization of Europe, to guarantee peace, and to facilitate the reduction of armaments: the war had drawn attention to the deficiencies of British physique, there must be measures of improvement, especially "habitations fit for the heroes who won the war" (an anticipation of his phrase a fortnight later about a land fit for heroes to live in): a minimum wage also was necessary, and shorter hours, with which increased production was not incompatible: there was to be a great development of communications and a new land policy: there would be no economic war after the war, and no taxes on food, but prevention of dumping, protection of key industries, and imperial preference: Welsh disestablishment was an irrevocable principle, though there might be financial rearrangements: Ireland should have Home Rule, without coercion of North-east Ulster: the parliamentary machine, cumbrous and dilatory, was to be brought up to date. Above all, mere party considerations must be dropped, there must be national unity—a united government representing all parties.

Mr. Bonar Law was a good deal less exuberant: in an appeal to the country to continue to save its money and lend it to the government he sounded a warning note—"Peace and plenty will come in time; at first it will be peace and scarcity." Nevertheless, he was sufficiently in agreement with the prime minister to recommend to his party the continuance of the coalition, and his party responded by expressing its perfect confidence in him as leader.

These decisions were followed by the

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announcement on November 14th that polling for the new parliament would take place a month later.

The suggestion that the old parliament had exhausted its mandate and outlasted its vitality was neither new nor unreasonable. In the days before victory was in sight it had been argued that for the effective guidance of a fifth year's fighting the government needed the re-invigoration of a vote of confidence from the electorate, and as long ago as July 18th a general election in the late autumn had been confidently prophesied by the *Times*. Now that the election was at hand it was clear that the occasion was extremely favourable for Mr. Lloyd George and unfavourable for the Asquithian Liberals and the Labour party, and there were plenty of critics to point out the fact. It was said that the nation was at one with its allies in wanting a peace based on the Fourteen Points, and that the government, with united national support, ought to devote itself exclusively to the elaboration of such a peace: a dissolution at this juncture was a conspiracy, an attempt to repeat the "khaki election" of 1900, and moreover it must involve an extensive disfranchisement of the soldiers.

Labour Opposition to the Coalition

The prime minister was not to get quite all the coalition, quite all the destruction of party, that he would have liked. On November 14th a meeting of the Labour party decided by an overwhelming majority to "terminate the conditions under which the party entered the coalition," and by a majority which was smaller but which still nearly reached two to one rejected Mr. Clynes's amendment in favour of supporting the government until the signature of peace. The Labour ministers resolved nevertheless, with the support of most of their partisans in the House of Commons, to remain in office; but soon after Messrs. Clynes, Brace, and Hodge left office from a sentiment of loyalty to their party, and at the same time Lord Robert Cecil from a conscientious objection to Welsh disestablishment.

No doubt the decision of the Labour

delegates was influenced by their consciousness that in their industrial organization they had a weapon which would save them from impotence even though at the polls they should be for the time completely defeated. Speakers at their meeting made it quite clear also that the party as a whole was likely to move towards the combined reprobation of the war and justification of force in civil affairs which some of its members had championed during the last four years. The meeting began² with a request from its chairman to stand "in silent remembrance of all those who have died or suffered in the struggle for the emancipation of humanity" and "especially of our comrades in prison everywhere," a commemoration the ambiguity of which was not altogether removed by his confidence that all their hearts were filled with gratitude for the Allied victory. Mr. Robert Williams thought that the opening of the flood-gates of criticism and opposition by a general election could not make for a peaceful transition to normal activities, and that if the working classes could not get their grievances redressed by a parliamentary Labour party they would resort to action of an extra-constitutional character. The only speaker to welcome the election was Mr. Will Thorne, who supported Mr. Clynes's amendment: he was followed by Mr. J. H. Thomas, in a speech condemning revolution. On the motion of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald it was resolved that the peace delegations of all countries should include direct official representation of the workers.

Labour Party's Programme

On November 26th the election campaign began with a manifesto from Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Bonar Law not materially differing from the programme already indicated. The Labour party replied with the advocacy of a peace of reconciliation, freedom for Ireland, abolition of conscription, a million good houses at public expense, a capital levy, nationalization of land, mines, railways, shipping, armaments and electric power, and equal rights for women: it added, "Even in an election as sinister as this, in which a large part of the nation's

SECURITY OF THE COALITION

youth is arbitrarily disfranchised by the Government, Labour confidently appeals to the country to support its programme of social justice and economic freedom." It is noteworthy that the first three of these proposals were supported also by the coalition.

From the first there was no doubt of a coalition majority: the only doubt was of its size. Mr. Lloyd George had asked the electors to trust him for the making of the peace and the reconstruction of a society

mind with want of energy and want of conviction: they had no alternative policy to propose: their most characteristic contribution to the cries and counter-cries of the election was the repeated asseveration that it was a crime and a blunder: that was not a very hopeful method of appealing for votes.

The Labour party was also at a disadvantage: much more than the independent Liberals it suffered from its war record. Of its most prominent members many had



RT. HON. JOHN HODGE

From a Photograph by C. Vandyk, Limited.



RT. HON. WILLIAM BRACE

From a Photograph by Russell, London.



RT. HON. J. R. CLYNES

From a Photograph by Hutchinson & Russell.

which had been shaken and which was not yet free from all danger of being shattered. He could make this demand with certainty of success, in reliance on the part he had played, and the larger part which could plausibly be attributed to him, in the efforts which had been crowned with victory. His confidence might be the greater because his success as the head of a coalition saved him from the most formidable of his potential enemies and enabled him to ask with some show of reason and hope of success for a degree of immunity from opposition such as no other British politician had ever dared hope for.

Nor were his only advantages the complaisance of his natural opponents and his facilities for representing criticism as factious or unpatriotic. What opponents there were were hopelessly discredited. The independent Liberals were associated in the public

believed in the impossibility or the undesirability of victory: some (including their most vigorous political organization, the Independent Labour Party, and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald) had not even been unwilling that the war should be stopped by revolution and had recommended that the example set in Russia of establishing workmen's and soldiers' councils should be followed in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, Labour promises of social reform were hardly more profuse than those of Mr. Lloyd George; and the members of the party who had not an inconvenient past of internationalism or pacifism had in revenge a past of co-operation with Mr. Lloyd George's government which handicapped them when they became preachers of opposition.

In these circumstances it was not likely to be a very close-run race; to predict the winner was so easy that there could not be

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much excitement: what excitement there was arose from a topic which brought no hope to the opposition, the topic of the treatment of Germany. Soon after the dissolution it had become clear that this

willing to do so): therefore she must be made to pay. The German government, and especially certain notorious members and servants of it, the Kaiser above all, had followed the crime of originating war with the crime of waging it by means of the most illegal and inhuman acts: therefore they must be punished.

These demands were not altogether unreasonable, nor necessarily vengeful, nor were they uncompromisingly renounced by all opponents of the coalition: nor indeed was the justice of the one at all involved in that of the other. That the defeated party should be made to pay was no new thing: to say that the defeated party was the guilty party was very much nearer to absolute truth in this case than in most cases: it was difficult to see how the victors were to meet their debts unless they exacted contributions from the vanquished: and it was not only to militarists and materialists that these considerations appealed—four and a quarter years sooner the editor of the *Nation* had declared in the columns of the *Daily News* that Germany must be made to pay, and pay heavily. It was true that the co-operation of the



MR. LLOYD GEORGE, M. CLEMENCEAU AND PRESIDENT WILSON
ON THEIR WAY TO THE PALACE AT VERSAILLES ON JUNE 28, 1919

From a Photograph by Illustrations Bureau.

was the question most interesting to a section of the electorate and of the press of which it is impossible either to estimate the number or to exaggerate the clamour. Germany had begun the war, it was argued, as all but the most perverse must admit: certainly she had lost the war, as nobody could deny (though later on men were found

United States had made a difference: the allied governments had not thought fit to dissociate themselves from the sentiments which Mr. Wilson had uttered, nor, except precisely on this point and on one other, to make reservations: they had had no part, except at the very end, in the negotiations which the Germans had carried on



A MEETING OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE AT VERSAILLES

From a Photograph by Topical Press.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

with him, on the basis of those utterances, before the armistice. They could persuade themselves that, even if those negotiations had never taken place, yet the Germans must have surrendered on almost the date of the armistice and on almost any terms, or on none—a fact, if it were a fact, not, perhaps, relevant in the strictest ethics to the moral obligations imposed on them by the president's notes, but which it required a very resolute virtue altogether to ignore. And then, even on the strictest Wilsonian doctrine, they were entitled to reparations. How much might that word cover? It was to be made to cover a good deal.

The Punishment of Germany

The wish to make Germany pay was natural and defensible: the wish to punish individual Germans was a good deal less so. It had no precedents to plead, or none worth pleading. It is tempting to say that it was less spontaneous: this cannot be proved, but at least it was probable in a nation of shopkeepers with hardly a hangman among them. It was chiefly the journalist anxious for a sensation and the politician convinced that the lowest motives are always the most calculable who were responsible for the eagerness to hammer the Hun and hang the Kaiser. Perhaps men who are at war or who have just ceased to be at war cannot be expected to reflect on their inaptitude for delivering moral judgments on their enemies. Even men at war might have seen (and in other wars had seen) that until there is an effective international authority national authorities cannot be properly punishable. In both these matters the "idealists" had behaved quite as ill as the "materialists."

They had abounded in moral judgments: with the accession of President Wilson to a controlling position moral judgments became the material of diplomacy. And again, the "idealists" had found much comfort in a distinction (which the president erected into a standard of policy) between the German government and the German people. The use of this distinction to force on the Germans a change of government seemed to some observers seriously to

compromise the doctrine of self-determination. More important in the present connexion was the support which it gave to the doctrine of retribution. If it were possible to name a small number of men who had all the responsibility, or nearly all, for the horrors of the last four and a half years, had not the victors a right, even a duty, to punish them? Even if the condition were indisputably fulfilled, there were many good reasons for answering the question in the negative: the "idealists" were not without responsibility for the unpopularity of those reasons, even though the "materialists" were more to blame for the irrational claim to have it both ways by hanging the German Kaiser and fining the German people.

However that may be, these two questions, of retribution and indemnity, became the main sources of excitement in the British election, and one of the causes of the enormous majority gained by the coalition. It would be pleasant to think that it was only a few of the electors who were vengeful and malignant: what the proportion was, it is impossible to tell. It was effective because of the co-operation of the noisiest journals. If the coalition leaders had resisted it, had maintained that our claims must be no more than for just reparations without any punitive intention and that defeat was penalty enough for Germany's rulers, it is difficult to doubt that it would have got all the majority it needed. Its leaders, and very many of its ordinary representatives, preferred to exploit every source of support, even if it meant drawing profit from the worst motives and the lowest tastes.

Mr. Lloyd George and Peace Terms

Mr. Lloyd George came into line on November 29th: he still declared his devotion to justice, but he made it clear that justice did not exclude severity: "It must be a just peace, a sternly just peace, a relentlessly just peace. . . . First of all, in every court in the world it is an axiom that if the claimant fails to establish the justice of his case he has got to bear the costs of litigation. . . . There is absolutely no doubt about the principle, and that is

THE NEW PARLIAMENT

the principle we should proceed upon—that Germany must pay the cost of the war up to the limit of her capacity to do so.” The prime minister went on to indicate German crimes and to promise an investigation, perfectly fair but stern and final, and he ended by saying that at the request of the attorney-general some of the greatest jurists in this country had

- (2) Punishment of those responsible for atrocities :
 - (3) Fullest indemnities from Germany :
 - (4) Britain for the British, socially and industrially :
 - (5) Rehabilitation of those broken in the war :
 - (6) A happier country for all.
- The coalition gained a success beyond its



COUNCIL OF FOUR AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

Mr. Lloyd George, Signor Orlando, M. Clemenceau, and President Wilson.

From a Photograph by Topical Press.

considered the question of responsibility and had unanimously arrived at the conclusion “that the Kaiser was guilty of an indictable offence for which he ought to be held responsible.”

Other mouthpieces of the coalition were even less cautious : one minister, eminent for executive abilities, entered the field of literature and promised that Germany should be squeezed “till the pips squeaked.” A few days before the poll an official list of coalition candidates was prefaced with a statement of Mr. Lloyd George’s programme in six points—

- (1) Trial of the Kaiser :

wildest hopes. The new parliament contained 484 coalitionists, who had thus a majority of 262 over all other parties combined : the next largest party was Labour, with 59, closely followed by independent Unionists with 48 : the Asquithians numbered only 26 : the rest hardly counted—7 Irish Nationalists, 7 Independents, 2 of the newly invented “National party,” and 73 Sinn Feiners who did not intend to sit.

The names were almost more striking than were the numbers : of the 41 ministers every one was triumphantly returned. Mr. Asquith and his principal lieutenants were rejected almost without exception, only three

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DOMINION REPRESENTATIVES AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE.
MR. HUGHES (RIGHT) AND SIR JOSEPH WARD

From a Photograph by Illustrations Bureau.

independent Liberals who had ever sat on a front bench being re-elected. Every Labour member suspected of pacifism or defeatism was rejected. Roman Catholic Ireland was solidly Sinn Fein.

The new government was announced on January 10th. In the main it was the old one over again, with some re-shuffling: the chief change was the disappearance of half the Labour ministers and the fact that those who remained were cut off from their party. The new ministry received a very tepid welcome from the press, though it is difficult to see what else the press had expected. The

people received it with indifference, perhaps indeed did not notice that there had been any change. The government that had been good enough to bring them out of war would be good enough, they hoped, to bring them into peace.

There were plenty of other tasks waiting, connected with the making of peace but distinct from it—demobilization, housing, the government of industry, the fixing of wages: but the peace treaty was the essential task, and claims the first attention.

The manner in which the peace treaties were made and the terms which they embodied were part of the history rather of the world than of the British people: here they will be indicated only in the most cursory way, and as they were directly connected with British developments.

What the British wanted or expected from the Versailles negotiations it is difficult to define: probably most of them had not very clear ideas or ardent desires: certainly all that they had imposed on their plenipotentiaries were the punishment

of German "war-criminals" and the exaction of heavy payments from the conquered, and they were to show curiously little resentment when these demands received only the most insubstantial satisfaction. Probably the other provisions necessary to a peace which they would tolerate were these—the full compensation of Belgium; the return of Alsace and Lorraine to France; the confiscation of at least most of Germany's colonies; and the destruction of the German navy. There was sympathy also with the national aspirations of Poles, Czecho-Slovaks, Jugo-Slavs, and Italians, though any under-

THE QUESTION OF REPARATIONS

standing of them was restricted to very narrow circles. The feeling that France should be insured against any fresh German aggression was perhaps more extensive and more definite. It was desired that the government should honour the obligations into which it had entered, though there was dislike of some of them, especially among those to whom they were best known, and though this laudable desire had not led to any very effective examination of the extent to which the armistice negotiations had restricted our right to reparations.

In this last matter the opposition parties were not much superior to the coalition: Labour had demanded reparation without making clear what it meant by it, and Mr. Asquith had been ready to justify the claim for all the costs of war. Finally, though British opinion was not unanimous in its conception of what a league of nations should be, or how much it could be expected to accomplish, yet there was no considerable section of it which did not regard the creation of such a league as a hopeful experiment for the avoidance of wars in the future.³

Of all the matters in dispute at the peace conference the reparations question was that in which the British people played, voluntarily or involuntarily, the greatest part. If demands were strictly limited to the compensation of damage done directly to civilian persons and property by German military action, then the United Kingdom would receive comparatively very little and the British dominions nothing at all. There would be the advantages that the bill would not be hopelessly incommensurate

with the debtor's capacity to pay, and that the exactions of the victors would be honourably within the "compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea and from the air," specified in the allied note of November 5th. These considerations at first decided the American delegation, but they did not suffice for Mr. Lloyd George and Monsieur Clemenceau, who were clear that their constituents expected Germany to pay all that she could, and indeed that they



INDIA'S REPRESENTATIVE AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE:
THE RAJAH OF BIKANIR

From a Photograph by Central News.

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would not be content with any fixed sum, however large.

They had their way. Mr. Lloyd George, who was rumoured to incline towards a moderation inconsistent with the election promises of his followers, was reminded of parliamentary exigencies by a telegram from 360 members of the House of Commons



GENERAL SMUTS

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

declaring that their constituents had "always expected that the first action of the peace delegates would be, as you repeatedly stated in your election speeches, to present the bill in full and make the Germans acknowledge their debt." President Wilson was persuaded by General Smuts that pensions and separation allowances were "items representing compensation to the members of the civilian population for damage sustained by them for which the German government are liable." The Germans were doomed to pay a thousand million pounds in the next two years, during which time an inter-allied commission was to work out a schedule of payments to extend over thirty years more.

If Mr. Lloyd George on paper had made Germany pay, on paper also he hanged the Kaiser. The treaty which the Germans were to sign included a declaration of Germany's responsibility for the war; the Kaiser's extradition was demanded, vainly, from Holland; provision was made for the trial of the lesser "war-criminals."

On the other hand, there was nothing hypothetical about the securities which the British Empire received for the future. The German navy was confiscated; the German colonies were transferred to the British and French governments on condition that the well-being and development of their populations should form a sacred trust of civilization, and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in the covenant of the League of Nations. Britain received the mandate also for Palestine (where she had promised to provide a national home for the Jews) and Mesopotamia.

Our obligations in eastern and southern Europe were fulfilled, if not without difficulty, at least without cost to us more direct than was involved in the destruction of Austria-Hungary and the disturbance of economic channels. Poles, Rumanians, Czecho-Slovaks, Jugo-Slavs, and Italians—all received less perhaps than they wanted, but as much as they needed, and, in some cases, more than it was easy to justify on principles of nationality and self-determination. The most difficult case was the clash of Italian and Jugo-Slav demands in the Adriatic, where a settlement had to be left to the future.

Western Europe was more difficult to re-arrange. France could not believe that she would be safe from renewed aggression so long as there were German soldiers on the left bank of the Rhine: she desired that the river should be Germany's frontier, with the bridges in allied control. President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George were alike opposed to this solution: they persuaded Monsieur Clemenceau to accept safeguards which were less complete. The coal of the Saar valley was to be at the disposal of France, and the district was to be administered by a commission appointed by the

CENTRAL EUROPE

According the Treaty of Versailles

1919

English Miles
0 100 200 300 400 500

- Boundaries according to the Treaty of Versailles.....
- Boundaries 1914.....
- The Central Empires 1914.....
- Boundaries not delimited.....
- Plebiscite Areas.....
- Territory administered by the League of Nations.....



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League of Nations for fifteen years, after which it was to decide its own political fate by plebiscite. The German army was to be reduced to 100,000 men, the right bank of the Rhine demilitarized for a depth of fifty kilometres, the bridgeheads to be occupied for fifteen years, or longer if there

France was not disposed to see an effective substitute in the League of Nations, the less as from that, too, American co-operation was withheld.

Of all the great problems before the Versailles conference the constitution of the League of Nations proved the easiest.



THE GERMAN DELEGATES SIGNING THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS

From a Photograph by the Central News.

were not sufficient guarantees for French security at the end of that period. Monsieur Clemenceau had been induced to accept these arrangements by the promise of an Anglo-American guarantee of French territory against invasion for ten years.

The guarantee was signed by French, American, and British plenipotentiaries on June 28th, 1919, the same day as the main treaty. It never came into force because the United States refused ratification and the British government declared that it could not accept the responsibility alone.

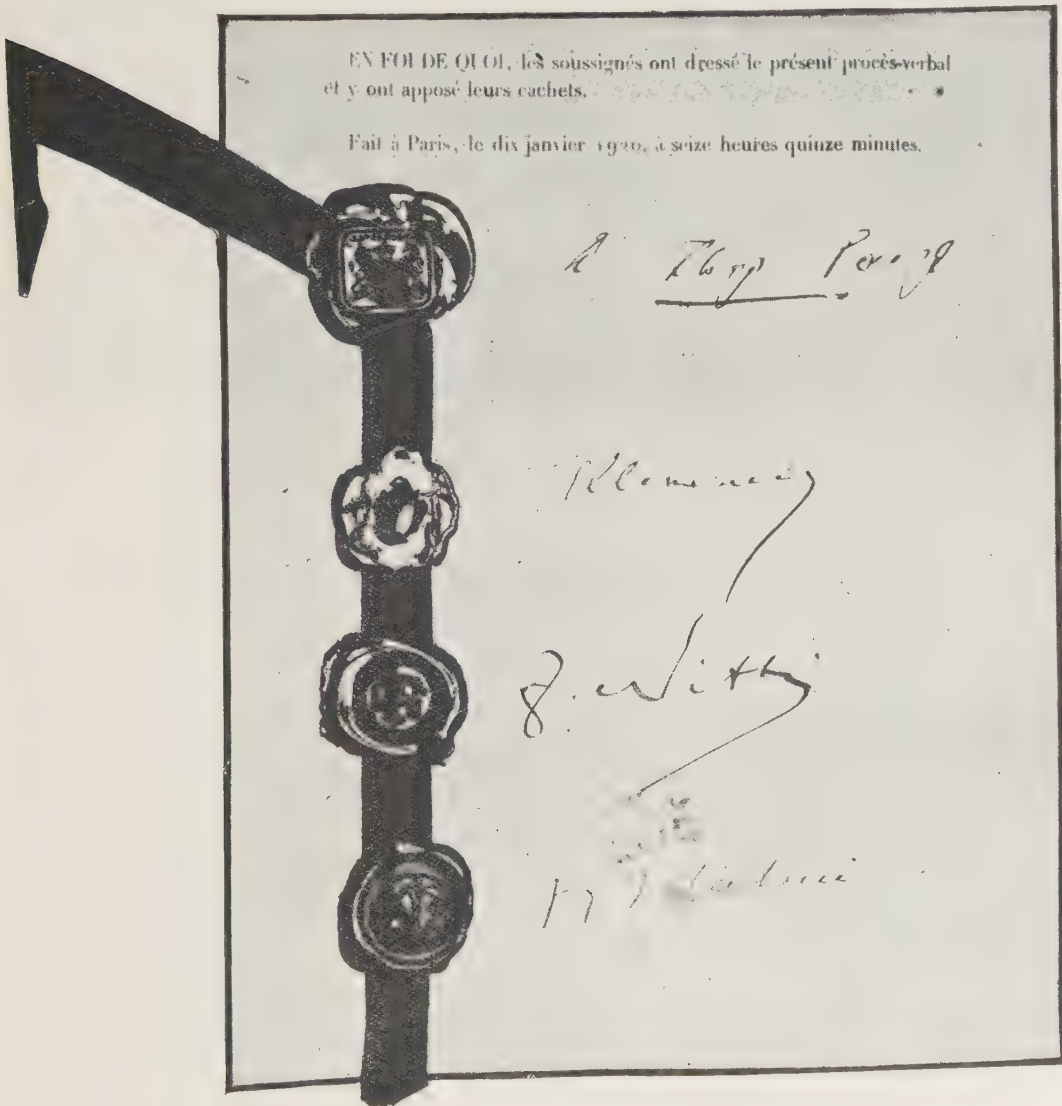
Without much difficulty a compromise was made between the British and American plans. The chief provisions of the covenant were that the states adhering to it recognized the necessity for reducing armaments, bound themselves not to make war without a preliminary procedure involving publicity and delay, and undertook to preserve one another's political independence and territorial integrity by means advised by the council of the league. It was clear that these provisions could not have full force till Russia and Germany were included in

AMERICA AND THE PEACE TREATY

the league: it was all the more clear when it became apparent that the United States also was to remain outside the new organization.

Such were the main provisions of the peace treaty as they directly affected the British people. Mr. Lloyd George could claim his constituents' gratitude as having secured for them all that they had wanted, though the penalties and the compensation were to prove insubstantial. In the deeper results which the British had hoped from the treaty

—appeasement, confidence and tranquillity—the treaty was not very promptly fruitful. For this there were many reasons; it is well to remember two of them: that the American representative did not represent America, and that the British representative was allowed by his people and by his conscience to represent especially almost the least worthy and the least permanent of the impulses which actuated the British people on the morrow of victory.



SIGNATURES OF THE ALLIES' REPRESENTATIVES TO THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES



BRITISH TROOPS FOR DEMOBILIZATION RESTING IN THE GROUNDS OF AN EXPEDITIONARY
FORCE CANTEEN IN ITALY

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

CHAPTER XII

STRIKES

MR. LLOYD GEORGE was satisfied that he brought back "a good peace, good for everyone but the Germans, and really . . . good for them."¹ Not all the people whom he had represented agreed with this judgment, and as time went on agreement did not become more general. Some of the grounds of criticism have already been indicated: there were others of which Mr. Lloyd George must have been as fully conscious as anyone, for on March 25th, 1919, he had drawn up a memorandum² of a programme to be recommended to the conference, and the decisions that he finally accepted differed widely from

these recommendations. The British people showed curiously little resentment when the Kaiser remained unhung and reparations unpaid: but there were other failures, at the time hardly noticed except by persons especially interested, which became serious causes of discontent, and concerning most of which the March memorandum had expressed certain intentions which were never realized. Russia, Turkey, Fiume, disarmament—the problems indicated by these words still, to the embarrassment of British policy, awaited solution, as well as the great problems of inducing France to feel safe and enabling Europe to work. For each



MCMXIV



MCMXVIII

THE BRITISH FIGHTING FORCES

THE ROYAL NAVY

PERSONNEL 15TH AUGUST 1914 147,667
 TOTAL ENLISTMENTS 1914-1918 407,310
 KILLED OR DIED OF WOUNDS 34,654

THE BRITISH ARMY

PERSONNEL 1ST AUGUST 1914 733,514
 ENLISTMENTS 1914-1918 :-

ENGLAND	400,158
WALES	272,024
SCOTLAND	55,018
IRELAND	13,202
CANADA	90,541
AUSTRALIA	410,800
NEW ZEALAND	124,211
SOUTH AFRICA	130,074
NEWFOUNDLAND	8,826
INDIA	133,802
EAST AFRICA	20,300
NYASSALAND	10,800
RHODESIA	7,200
NIGERIA	15,567
GOLD COAST	10,287
SIERRA LEONE	694
GAMBIA	371
WEST INDIES	
BRITISH HONDURAS	15,950
BRITISH GUIANA	
BERMUDA	560
CYPRUS	3,000
MALTA	3,000

TOTAL ENLISTMENTS OF THE
 BRITISH ARMY 1914 TO 1918
 8,818,896

TOTAL OF: KILLED IN ACTION, DIED FROM
 WOUNDS, OR DIED AS PRISONERS OF WAR
 908,371

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

PERSONNEL 1914 1,000
 TOTAL ENLISTMENTS 1914-1918 293,532
 KILLED OR DIED OF WOUNDS 4,080

GRAND TOTAL OF MEN ENLISTED IN
 THE NAVY, ARMY AND AIR FORCE
 UP TO NOVEMBER 1918

9,669,311

DIED FOR THE EMPIRE
 947,105

THE BRITISH EMPIRE ROLL OF HONOUR

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

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of these failures there are many other explanations besides those that are damaging to the British government which participated in the Versailles conference, but those were the ones most interesting to the British people.

What the Treaty Accomplished

At the time the government suffered very little damage: there were critics who saw in the failure to arrive at a settlement in the East, the smashing of Austria-Hungary, and the unmeasured burdening of Germany, the fruits of injustice and the seeds of suffering, of a suffering from which Great Britain would not be exempt. But these critics, however important, were not very numerous: the majority of the British people was content that something had been made which could be called a peace, that the maritime power of Germany had ceased to exist, that France, Belgium and Serbia had made the gains to which Britain had promised to help them, and that the League of Nations had been constituted: the zeal for punishment had cooled; as for reparations, it was assumed that they would be paid more or less, and sooner or later.

The great task of the reinforced coalition government had been accomplished if not to the satisfaction of all its constituents at least with something like contentment for most of them. Already other discontents were clamorous, other tasks were urgent. Of these tasks the heaviest—they were to prove indeed too heavy for the coalition—were the government of Ireland, the demobilization of the military forces, and the settlement of industry.

The social conflict had been very incompletely superseded by the military struggle: its long period of comparative and interrupted quiescence had not had a mollifying effect: the armistice was no sooner signed than it resumed all its pre-war activity and threatened to become more active still.

For this there were many reasons: if the advance of wages had not kept pace with that of prices, still the abundance of employment and the governmental measures to keep down the cost of primary necessities

had secured to the mass of manual workers larger real annual earnings than they had enjoyed before. Those who had benefited by this state of things were determined to use all the means at their disposal to ensure its continuance. At the same time there was a large class of wage-earners, the most intelligent and the best organized, whose economic situation the war organization of industry had changed for the worse, absolutely to a considerable extent and relatively to a very great extent. These were the skilled workers, between whose remuneration and that of the unskilled the gap had diminished where it had not disappeared. Such men had long been impatient at their relative depression in the labour market, and resolute to fight for its discontinuance at the earliest opportunity.

Then there was the complication of the hundreds of thousands of women who had become for the first time wage-earners and who, some by taste but most from necessity, were anxious to go on earning wages. How were these women, or the great numbers of them who would not be otherwise disposed of in the natural course, to be saved from destitution at a time when war industry was ceasing, when peace industry was still far (no one knew how far) from reconstitution, and when there were millions of discharged soldiers and sailors demanding employment?

Growing Dissatisfaction of the People

The industrial problem was aggravated by political and financial considerations. The war had not only enormously, perhaps exaggeratedly, emphasized the indispensability and therefore the power of manual labour, it had also revealed, in a light that had certainly more of justice than of flattery, the defects of those whose labour was not manual. If British statesmen had not lost the war, they had not prevented it and might reasonably be accused of having won it more dearly than was necessary. The British people was not unaccustomed to mistakes from its generals and was prepared to have for them something of the indulgence with which it treats its lacrosse players or ski-runners; but it was a serious



CANADIAN TROOPS FOR DEMOBILIZATION LEAVING SOUTHAMPTON

From a Photograph by the Graphic Photo Union.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

shock to find that even British admirals were not above criticism. Of the captains of industry and the magnates of finance it was more difficult, though not impossible, to say where they had failed, but it was fatally easy to suggest that in any case they had been overpaid for what they had done and that it was the worst of them who had been most overpaid. Civil servants had entered the popular imagination as "Mr. Dilly" and "Mr. Dally," and the business men who were to have supplied all their deficiencies were remembered chiefly for the largeness of their notions in the matters of spending public money and commanding public-houses.

Matters for Discontent

Popular criticisms such as these were not without justification, and as time went on the justificatory evidence became more specific and available. One respectable estimate³ puts the direct cost of the war at something over forty thousand million pounds, of which more than two-thirds fell on the Allies, Great Britain bearing the largest (if her advances to associated governments be not reckoned assets, much the largest) share. The loss of lives also fell with disproportionate weight on the Allies: the same authority calculates that of the ten million dead only just over three million were our enemies; though here Great Britain has not the tragic eminence of heading the list, her eight hundred thousand putting her third to Russia and France, and only just above Serbia.

It was possible, therefore, to believe that we had honourably gone to war and wisely rejected all thought of peace without victory, and yet to feel impatient of the leadership which had bought success at so great a price. Nor were there wanting plausible charges against that leadership (for it had not changed hands) in the early days of peace. Why was not demobilization more rapid? Why were not pensions of the injured more generous? What was being done to remedy the lack of houses which the war had so much increased, the monstrous loss of ships, or the terrifying gap between national income and expenditure? How was the

vastly swollen public debt to be borne, and the manufacturing population of this island to be fed in a world of inflated currencies and dancing exchanges, a world in which western Europe could not import the things we made nor Russia export the wheat we needed? All these problems complicated, too, by the necessity of changing back from a war to a peace industry and of providing governments which they would bear and we could afford for Ireland, Egypt, India, Mesopotamia, and Palestine.

Here were political complications enough to intensify every tendency to industrial unrest: there were others as well. The older ambition of extremist leaders to put all industry under the management of the State had been largely replaced by a desire to secure to the wage-earners within each industry at least a share in its management. Along with this went an inclination to look to strikes rather than to votes as instruments of progress, an inclination which was reinforced by the hopeless position of Socialism at the general election of 1918. The turning away from parliamentarism and the passion for large and sudden changes were encouraged also by examples on the Continent. From the Rhine to the Urals and farther there were revolutions by the dozen, all of them more or less Socialist and some of them as far as possible from parliamentary.

Effects of the War on Politics

These events had already produced material effects in Britain. A Labour minister had as long ago as 1917 left the government because it sympathized less than he did with Russian revolution, and the government had allowed him to leave it in circumstances that could not but exacerbate his resentment. The man whom he had replaced (but not for ever) as the leader of the Labour party had been willing in the dark days of the war to flirt in public with the methods of Bolshevism. The Communists had become, if not a large, at least already a considerable party.

The war had produced its natural effect of strengthening nationalism and conservatism, but it had also provided Socialist



THE EMPIRE'S TRIBUTE TO "THE GLORIOUS DEAD"

From a Water-colour Drawing by Christopher Clark, R.I.

THE MOOD OF POST-WAR BRITAIN

apostles with a new power of disintegration. The privileged position into which trade unions had been put both by industrial development and by Liberal legislation was strengthened and emphasized. There were other elements of particularism also: conscientious objection, for instance, and the very frequent assumption that there was something about it at once democratic and progressive. Whatever was the truth on this last point, one thing certain, though not always recognized, about the refusal to conform with the Military Service Acts was its close connexion with the religious nonconformity which has been for three and a half centuries a main factor in English history, and whose best-known manifestation in the last generation was passive resistance to the rate collector and the vaccinator.

Growth of Internationalism

Not only in these ways were the people who most loudly professed devotion to the community tempted to deny the sovereignty of the community, but also the war assisted to spread the doctrine that there was something false and vicious about the very essence of the community as it existed in most men's minds. Could anything be worth the expenditure of ten million lives and forty thousand million pounds? Was not that expenditure due partly to the capitalist organization of society, but partly as well to national sovereignties and patriotic fervours? If so, were not these things evil, were they not even *the* evil? Such were the questions which gave to the internationalism of the Socialist leaders a force which it had lacked before. It was true that the war had also intensified the nationalism of ordinary men (and even of many Socialists), but the gradual perception in cold blood of the price paid and to be paid chilled all such enthusiasms. Internationalism of some sort, from Bolshevism to the League of Nations, and from new Cobdenism to Christian reunion, was very generally the mood of post-war Britain; and an internationalist is very often, if not necessarily, an anti-nationalist.

It is not altogether fanciful to find a

disturbing force also in the rise during the war period of psychology to take the place of physics as the fashionable science, as physics a generation earlier had taken the place of biology. Not that discontented railwaymen or despairing unemployed were led astray in any large numbers by reading Freud or Jung: but the new psychology, understood or misunderstood, was one of the causes predisposing publicists to exaggerate the efficacy and the value of propaganda and even of mere assertion, and to doubt or even to deny the value of the moderating quality of self-restraint.

Development of Discontent

There was something in the facts of psychology as well as in the talk about it working the same way. In any period the mass of decent ordinary men occupied with their own work and their own desires is always apt to be overborne by the smaller numbers who have a divine passion, or an unholy itch, to direct the labours and control the motives of their fellows. In normal times there are enough men sharing both the impulses of the latter class and the tastes of the former to keep the balance tolerably steady. The war had reduced the supply of such men. Many who might have played a public part on the side of steadiness but not of stagnation, and have been in some degree leaders of an essential conservatism, had no energies left to do more than take up the threads of their own lives; while the energies of the champions on the other side had been not exhausted but only exercised. And whereas the worst of the demobilized men were tempted to think that they had displayed merit enough to deserve endowment for life, many of the best of those who had not been mobilized felt, however much against their own intellectual convictions, that they had refused the *beau rôle* but that they might play a part as fine now, and show a courage as reckless in a society which did require to be saved from the effects of victory even though (or all the more because) the contest had been unnecessary. Moreover, as has been seen, there was temptation enough for the best men and the worst, militarist or

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pacifist, to dislike and distrust governing bodies and the leading men ; and nothing was more certain than that demobilization could not be rapid enough or just enough to avert complaints and even disorders.

There were plenty of reasons, then, besides those that were purely economic, why the period after the war should be marked by discontents expressing themselves in the only effective way available—by strikes :

the beginning of February, 1919. In December, also, the prime minister had to intervene to settle by compromise a strike in which the cotton-spinners were demanding increased wages.

In the new year signs of trouble accumulated. Mr. Lloyd George was much impressed by the spread of Bolshevism in Europe. Mr. Smillie and Mr. Frank Hodges, both reputed extremists, became president

and secretary respectively of the Miners' Union. Demobilization was now proceeding as rapidly as could be expected, and by the end of January about a million men had been released from the colours ; but by the end of March there were more than a million recipients of the unemployment allowance. Some of the expected sweets of peace were thus being enjoyed. In the course of the year



MR. ROBERT SMILLIE

From a Photograph by Hugh Cecil.



MR. FRANK HODGES

From a Photograph by Barratt.

and to the British people in general strikes were, in fact, the most notable events of the two and a half years after the armistice.

Within a month of the armistice, organized labour was already showing its determination to have a better world to live in and its unwillingness to trust to Mr. Lloyd George's promises for the realization of this ideal. The prime minister was able, without making any very definite concessions, to dismiss deputations of women workers who demanded an adequate maintenance allowance on discharge ; but threats from the railwaymen (who in September had been promised the consideration of the eight-hour question immediately after the war) led to the government's granting the eight-hour day on December 6th, and promising time-and-a-quarter pay for overtime from

restrictions were relaxed or abolished with regard to beer, spirits, the press, bread, sugar, meat, gas, electricity, milk, cheese, and butter ; but, on the whole, the liberties and luxuries that had been looked for were slow to materialize. By-elections went badly for the government ; and then it had the great railway strike to deal with.

It was lucky that the great strikes came when they did, and not sooner. A very competent authority⁴ is of the opinion that in the first quarter of 1919 unrest reached its high-water mark. At that period wages were on the whole keeping the level they had reached, and prices were very slow in falling : the question chiefly interesting wage-earners was one not of money, but of hours ; not the increase of remuneration, but the reduction of the

THE CLYDE STRIKE

working day. Where other demands were made, the purpose was often not less political than economic; as, for instance, when the Miners' Federation, in January, announced its policy to be not only the six-hour day, but also a general wage advance of 30 per cent. and the nationalization of the industry, it

is habitually easy to disturb. By the end of January it had become the danger-point in the series of disputes which were breaking out all over Great Britain. On the Clyde the strike leaders were certainly moved by political rather than economic motives; the ostensible demand was for a week of



SCENE AT A "TUBE" STATION DURING THE STRIKE, 1919

From a Photograph by the Graphic Photo Union.

may reasonably be supposed that to compel nationalization was the chief object of the leaders, however it may have been with the mass of the men. A forty-seven-hour week was agreed on between the Engineering and Shipbuilding Employers' Federations and the trade unions in those industries, but still the new system was not set going without friction.

The Clyde district, partly because of the large Irish and foreign admixture in its population, partly because Scotsmen are more combative than Englishmen, chiefly because of its intolerable housing conditions,

forty hours, or even less, in order that the returning soldiers and the 450,000 persons already unemployed (by the end of February it was to be a million) might be provided with employment. This demand was pressed less by trade union officials—the regular representatives of the manual labourers in industrial disputes—than by shop stewards elected in the various workshops and having no very definite common organization, and by various committees and individuals of no representative value and with starkly revolutionary aims.

On January 30th the strikers on the Clyde

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addressed to the government a request that it should intervene to force the employers to give way, at the same time threatening that if the government did not comply they would go beyond the "constitutional methods" hitherto adopted and have recourse to "any other methods which they might consider likely to advance their cause." Mr. Bonar Law, who was acting as deputy prime minister, refused to accede to such a summons, on the ground that "the question of working hours is the precise question . . . which is being dealt with at the present time between the employers and the representatives of the trade unions. . . . The government are unable to entertain requests for interventions made by local members of unions whose representatives are acting for them in conference with the employers."

The Industrial Triple Alliance

There were strikes enough and threats of strikes in other places as well as on the Clyde. In Belfast the stoppage was as complete as in Glasgow; shipyard workers were out in London and on the north-east coast, and various smaller disputes were in progress all over the country. Besides this there had already been rioting by soldiers discontented with the pace of demobilization, and there might be more; officers and soldiers alike were pressing for increased pay; here the demands were natural enough and in no way political. This was less true of the police, who were resuming their campaign for the recognition of their union (and who in August were to strike for it). On February 3rd there was a sudden strike of the workers on the London tubes, in breach of an eight-hour agreement lately accepted by their leaders. There were reasonable fears that the railwaymen in general might stop work as well, and perhaps also the miners and transport men who with them formed the Industrial Triple Alliance, concluded just before the war, and never yet put into active operation. An electricians' strike which would have paralysed all the power stations was averted only with the utmost difficulty and at the very last moment.

In the course of February the Clyde conflagration and the less formidable blazes elsewhere flickered out. They left behind a widespread inclination among members of unions to use the strike weapon for political ends, even to control foreign policy, and especially to cut off British assistance from anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia. Already, while the sporadic outbursts of the beginning of the year were still disquieting the government, the threat existed and was becoming urgent of a strike on quite a different scale, perhaps even something that might justly be called a general strike, in which this political element—what was called direct action—would take a part more effective if not more violent.

The transport workers were claiming an increase of wages and a reduction of hours. The railwaymen had secured their reduction of hours: now they demanded that the permanence of the war wages should be guaranteed and (a real and important innovation) that they should exercise over their industry a measure of control equal to that of the shareholders. The miners asked for higher wages, shorter hours and nationalization, or at least some change in that direction.

Outcome of National Conference

One result of the January and February strikes had been a national conference, called by the government, of representatives of employers and workmen. Its chief recommendations were the national enforcement of a forty-eight-hour week and of a minimum wage, and the institution of a national industrial council. It was a welcome instance of moderation and agreement coming between the conflicts which were just over and the greater ones which were threatening; but its practical effect was inconsiderable, for though in the summer bills were introduced into parliament with the object of putting into effect its first two suggestions, the bills were enthusiastically welcomed by no one, and made no progress.

Hardly more progress was made by the negotiations between the government and the spokesmen of the Triple Alliance. The miners were offered an immediate wage

THE PROBLEM OF THE MINING INDUSTRY

increase of a shilling a day, and a joint committee of inquiry; but they decided by a six-to-one majority to strike. By the middle of March it was clear that the government's offers to the railwaymen also were less than would satisfy them. The Transport Workers' Union obtained a forty-eight-hour week for all tramway employees. Moreover, the Triple Alliance was interesting itself in matters even more predominantly political than the question of nationalization—Russia, the blockade of Germany, the treatment of conscientious objectors, the abolition of conscription.

At the end of February the miners agreed to postpone their strike till March 22nd, on condition of the immediate appointment of a royal commission to consider the whole future of the industry, and especially to present by March 20th an interim report on hours and wages. This interim report, prepared under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Sankey, was ready on the appointed day, and for the time staved off trouble. There was a two-shilling-a-day increase in wages and an immediate reduction of one hour a day, with a conditional promise of another in 1920. The consequent addition to the cost of coal was not immediately disastrous, because the circumstances of the time permitted the British to pass on much of it to foreign buyers: and this was not the least of the reasons for the progressive diminution on the Continent, and especially in France and Italy, of affection for Great Britain.

The problem of the mining industry was only postponed; meanwhile other problems not less serious had to be solved. In August the second police strike was decisively defeated; the economic grievances had been met, and the contention was now simply for recognition of the Police Union. In London only a thousand men came out, and they were all dismissed: only in Liverpool was the strike for a few days dangerous: its defeat, like the failure of the Clyde strikes and the time gained by the Sankey award, was a valuable reinforcement to the old order.

Another such reinforcement was supplied by the course of the railway strike in

September. All through the summer there was a strong movement in the labour ranks to commit their forces to direct action for political objects; but the Trade Union Congress, which met in September, refused to pronounce for such a policy, though it arranged that a special congress should be held in December if the government had not given way. By the time this congress met,



SIR JOHN SANKEY

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

interest was concentrated almost exclusively on the question of nationalizing the mines, to which it will be necessary to return later. Meanwhile the railwaymen had struck by themselves and for their own professional objects.

All through the year negotiations had been going on for the standardization of railway wages. In August the government made a definitive offer which was so lacking in clarity that the men thought it meant reductions, varying from 1s. to 16s., to begin with the new year; while it was afterwards explained that there was to be no reduction at all except as a sequel to a fall in the cost of living. On September 24th the

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National Union of Railwaymen ordered a strike, which began two days later and lasted nine days.

Half a million railwaymen stopped work at once; before the strike was over nearly as many workmen in other industries were idle for want of material, and a few days more would have put millions in the same situation.

Government and the Railway Strike

The government had had ample warning of the probability of a strike; indeed, there were those who asserted that it had manoeuvred to make the strike inevitable because it was confident of its capacity to meet it. Certainly the arrangements made for distributing food and the absolute necessities worked to admiration. The strike showed no signs of spreading, of involving the other members of the Triple Alliance, for instance; indeed these unions, especially the Transport Workers' Federation, played an important part in the negotiations which resulted in a settlement. There was very little sabotage or disorder, but on the other hand there was an unprecedented abundance of public argumentation.⁵ This began with the government's allegation that the strike was a subversive conspiracy engineered by a few enemies of society: the circulation of the *Daily Herald* doubled: compositors and printers threatened to stop the newspapers unless the railwaymen were allowed to put their case: both sides published full-page advertisements in the newspapers: Mr. Lloyd George supplied the cinemas with a message denouncing the strikers, and Mr. J. H. Thomas rejoined by having "himself filmed in the act of delivering a cogent reply."

The tendency of all this statement and counter-statement was to lessen the general inclination to believe that the railwaymen were the tools of a dangerous anarchist plot, but also to persuade the public (and the railwaymen) that, whether before the strike or not, certainly now the government was offering terms which ought to be accepted.

On October 5th they were accepted: wages were to be stabilized at the existing level

till September 30th, 1920: no adult railwayman was to earn less than 51s. a week until the cost of living was less than 110 per cent. above the pre-war level.

All parties claimed the victory: it is possible, without attempting to adjudicate between them, to indicate some of the results of the stoppage. One was that railway users (and that means in the end everyone) suffered, for, apart from the immediate economic dislocation, subsequently both goods rates and passenger rates were advanced to meet the increased wages bill. Another was that the fear was lessened (and the hope postponed) of a sudden re-shaping of society by direct action. As February had shown the inability of local extremists to capture or stampede the national industrial organizations, so September proved that the most powerful of all the national organizations could declare industrial war without producing a social upheaval.

The Miners' Strike

It was these considerations, combined with the fact that wages in general remained at their highest level and in some cases rose still further, which made the miners' strike, when at last it came, less formidable than it had threatened to be. The war had enormously increased the share of trade unions in government.⁶ They had a part in committees for organizing relief, for controlling the food supply, and for administering pensions: their nominees sat on munition tribunals and on Whitley councils: it was to them, and the employers' organizations, rather than to parliament that the prime minister appealed for advice on the industrial situation in February, 1919: and for the Sankey Commission they nominated half of the members, not only three miners to balance the three owners, but also three of the six members from outside the industry.

The commission's findings were ready on June 22nd: they were very far from unanimous, except in this respect, that all the commissioners recommended the acquisition of mining royalties by the State. There were four separate reports. The indepen-



A MEETING OF THE COAL COMMISSION IN THE KING'S ROBING ROOM, HOUSE OF LORDS, 1919

From a Photograph by the London News Agency.

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dent employers were divided into a party of five and a party of one, the one (Sir Arthur Duckham) proposing district amalgamations of collieries under statutory authority in the interests of efficient management. Mr. Justice Sankey recommended that the principle of nationalization should be accepted and a scheme immediately instituted under which State ownership should be complete within three years.

when the government made an offer not much different from Sir Arthur Duckham's suggestion it was threatened with a general strike to compel nationalization.

This strike (which when it came was not general and did not directly demand full nationalization) took more than a year in preparation. During all that time there was a continuous campaign in favour of nationalization. The leaders of this cam-



HOW THE CITY WAS REACHED DURING THE RAILWAY STRIKE

From a Photograph by E. Hullon & Co.

The miners' representatives declared themselves in substantial agreement with the chairman's report, although they suggested some objections and additions (half of them, for instance, disapproved of the payment of compensation to dispossessed mineral owners).

The Labour party contended that the government was bound to carry out the recommendations of the commission, and that the chairman's proposal, with the qualified approval of the miners' members, ought therefore to be put into force: and

paign were helped to keep it alive by the industrial unrest and by the interest in direct action which remained acute throughout 1919 and 1920, though perhaps in the end their failure was due partly to the weakness consequent on so long a period of feverish ardour.

The temperature was kept up by partial miners' strikes, by the railway strike, and by the dockers' inquiry. There were political heats as well. The municipal elections of November, 1919, were a triumph for the Labour party, and there was talk of turn-



Lorries in Hyde Park under government control for food supplies.

Photo: Alferi.



Private motor cars parked in Hyde Park for service.

Photo: Alferi.



Lining up for buses in the suburbs at 8 a.m.

Photo: Alferi.



A long queue waiting for trams.

Photo: Tobin.

LONDON DURING THE RAILWAY STRIKE, 1919

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AT WATERLOO STATION ON THE FIRST MORNING OF THE RAILWAY STRIKE

From a Photograph by E. Hulton & Co.

ing local bodies into soviets. In February, 1920, the prime minister announced that British troops were evacuating Batoum, the last Russian territory which they occupied; but neither that nor the disillusion of a Russian tour undertaken by a party of its members sufficed to destroy the Labour party's solicitude for the Bolshevik government. A Council of Action representing the Trades Union Congress and the Labour party was authorized to offer "resistance of any and every form" to intervention against the Soviet government, and local councils of action were formed to assist it. A special meeting of the Trades Union Congress had already threatened a general strike to prevent the military coercion of Ireland.

Nevertheless, the miners failed in their attempt to involve all the forces of labour in direct action for the realization of their economic-political programme. In March a Trades Union Congress card vote gave

three and three-quarter million votes for political action in favour of nationalization, and only a million for a general strike. The Miners' Federation demanded a wages advance of 3s. a day, but accepted the government's counter-offer with a guaranteed minimum of 1s. 6d. a day. The danger had been tided over again, but not for long: in July the miners, convinced of the government's intention to restore unrestricted private ownership, demanded a reduction of 14s. 2d. in the price of domestic coal and a wage increase of 2s. a day. It was clear that the profits of the industry could not meet both these demands, and the former was soon dropped. The government's final offer was an increase of wages varying with the increase of the output of coal above a specified datum-line: this was rejected, and the strike which had been threatened for nearly two years began on October 18th, 1920.

THE MINERS' STRIKE SETTLEMENT

Though the strike was fought on the question of wages, yet the demand for nationalization was implicit throughout, and the hope remained that there might be something like general support from the other unions, or at least from the transport workers and railwaymen. This hope had been strengthened by the proceedings of the Trades Union Congress⁷ in September, when Mr. J. H. Thomas, the railwaymen's leader, declared the readiness of the workers, not as a section but as a movement, to accept any challenge to their industrial freedom or economic emancipation, and defended the Council of Action as a united and determined working-class effort which, though it challenged the constitution, had been justified by success: but though the congress had accepted the justice of the miners' claims,

it had made no promise of any material support.

The government had had ample warning and was well prepared with emergency measures to meet the strike: the stoppage did not, after all, spread to other industries, and in something over a fortnight it was ended by an agreement which was substantially a victory for the men on the wages issue: they got their extra 2s. a day at once, in anticipation of an increase of output; for the first quarter of 1921 wages were to vary with the price of export coal, and after that time they were to be regulated by a scheme agreed between the owners and the men and approved by the government.

The restriction of the coal strike to the miners and its concentration on wage demands may be taken to mark the beginning

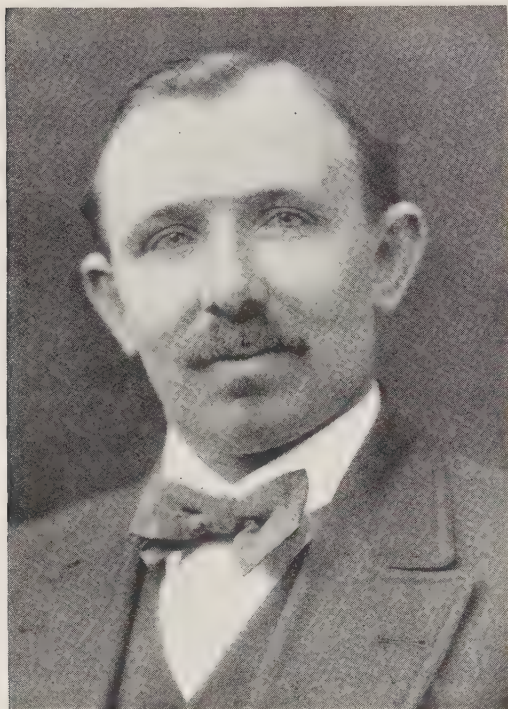


A SCENE AT SALFORD DURING THE RAILWAY STRIKE

From a Photograph by E. Hulton & Co.

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of the end of the left wing's chances of speedily capturing the whole of the labour forces. Yet those chances were by no means annihilated, and the next year was to witness a revival of them which for a time seemed likely to be effective, and in the same form as before—a miners' dispute partly on wages and partly on the manage-



THE RT. HON. J. H. THOMAS
From a Photograph by Russell, London.

ment of the industry, with a probability that it might be taken up by other workers, particularly transport workers and railwaymen, and a possibility that it might develop a truly revolutionary character.

Meanwhile a great change in the general economic condition of the country, for some time predicted, had become actual and manifest. For very nearly six years the demand for goods to carry on the war, and then to get back from war to peace, had kept both prices and wages rising. The necessity of filling some of the gaps which war had made in production, the optimism of victory, the elasticity of the currency, the rise in standards of personal

expenditure, these and similar factors had made possible a period of nearly two years' prosperity after the armistice. In the autumn of 1920 no wages had yet fallen, and miners' wages had just risen, while retail prices were still rising.⁸

But the top had been reached, and it was already clear that a fall was imminent: deflation and heavy taxation at home, the instability of foreign currencies, the European impoverishment which restricted our markets, all combined to discourage production. The great problem of the next two years, however, was to be not dearth but unemployment.

According to the *Labour Gazette*,⁹ wages on the whole rose from 100 in July, 1914, to something over 175 in July, 1918, and to 260 in July, 1920, and at the same dates the cost-of-living figures were 100, 205, and 252. No doubt the movement was really more favourable to the wage-earner than these figures indicate, since they allow nothing for the greater regularity of employment nor for the tendency not to buy those objects of expenditure which had most risen in price. At the end of 1920 the movement began to be the other way: in the course of the next year retail prices fell from 265 to 199. At the same time wages were falling generally, though not quite universally nor altogether regularly: and unemployment, which had begun to be disquieting in the autumn of 1919, was becoming terrifying. The trade union unemployment figures rose from 6.1 at the beginning of 1920, to 10 per cent. at the end of March and 23 per cent. (an unprecedented figure) at the end of June. The settling of the coal strike brought some improvement; but at the close of the year the number receiving unemployment benefit under the Insurance Act was still not far short of two millions.

These and the other economic ills which afflicted the British people in 1921 and 1922 took no one by surprise, and attempts had been made to meet them—attempts of very partial and varying effectiveness—a Housing Act, which did very little, an Industrial Courts Act which did something, an Agriculture Act which did a good deal



A MEETING OF RAILWAY WORKERS ON TOWER HILL DURING THE STRIKE



A SCENE AT PADDINGTON STATION DURING THE STRIKE

From Photographs by E. Hulton & Co.

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for a time. Most effective of all, though by its nature it could not be more than palliative, was the extension of unemployment insurance. This was extended to cover twelve million instead of four million persons, and the period during which benefit was receivable was prolonged from fifteen to twenty-six weeks. The system was costly and it could be abused, but it is difficult to see how without it the days of distress could have been made tolerable.

The Second Coal Strike

A time when wages and prices were falling and unemployment was widespread was unfavourable to attempts to improve industrial conditions by withholding labour. Nevertheless, 1921 saw ninety million days lost by lock-outs and strikes, of which far the greatest, and the last which threatened a general stoppage and even revolution, was the second coal strike.

The settlement reached the previous year had not been intended to be final. The advance of wages granted had been dependent on output and export; the two sides had promised to co-operate in the interests of efficiency and in the preparation for the fixing of wages of a scheme to be ready for government consideration by March 31st; further, the miners were interested in the general control of the industry perhaps not very much less, and their leaders even more, than in the regulation of wages. Hence there was a certainty of trouble when, on February 23rd, the government announced its intention of discontinuing control at the end of March (five months sooner than it would have lapsed under the Mining Act), and when at about the same time it became public that there was a deadlock in the negotiations between the miners and the owners, the former insisting on a national, and the latter on a district, basis for the regulation of wages.

Output and export had not remained at the level foreseen by the Miners' Federation; so far from it that the conditional wage advances promised to the men had been wiped out, and the owners' profits were going the same way. The Decontrol Bill became law on March 24th. On March 18th

the owners' final offer was placed before the Miners' Federation. In each colliery a level was to be fixed, below which wages were not to fall; in each district the owners' profits were to be 17 per cent. of the sum of the wages paid; any surplus arising from the pit-head sale of coal after providing for these two claims was to go 75 per cent. to the men and 25 per cent. to the owners.

When the miners rejected these terms by a large majority, it seemed that a general strike was imminent. The first stages of the strike displayed ominous characteristics of violence. The safety men, without whom the mines would be flooded, stopped work at the same time as their mates, and, though the government was able to replace them with engine-room ratings from the navy, it was not before very great damage had been done, and the pump-men refused to go back as a preliminary to further discussion. The miners declared their determination to attend no conference which was in any way restricted by conditions, and to insist, when they did attend a conference, on a national wages board and a national profits pool as the basis of settlement.

Fears for a General Strike

The government's arrangements for feeding the country worked very well, but it was easy to fear that they might break down, and the absolute subjection of the parliamentary state to organized Labour be demonstrated, if the other partners in the Triple Alliance were to join with the miners. This fear was removed by the middle of April.

It was a fear by no means unjustified. On April 8th the railwaymen and transport workers decided to strike in four days' time unless negotiations had been opened. Then a meeting between owners and miners was arranged for the 11th, and on that date the other two allies postponed their intervention until the 15th, but declared that they would not abandon it unless the miners had received an acceptable offer. On the 12th Mr. Hodges, secretary of the Miners' Federation, intimated that



FIGHTING THE COAL STRIKE BY POSTER

From a Photograph by the Topical Press.

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his society was willing to forgo the national pool.

This was a step towards settlement, but there was a long way yet to go, and, indeed, the advance made was at once apparently cancelled, for the offer of Mr. Hodges was repudiated by the federation, which took no pains to hide its indignation at what it regarded as the treachery of its allies. The Triple Alliance was in fact destroyed, and later in the year it was formally dissolved.

End of the Second Coal Strike

The action of the railwaymen and transport workers cannot be completely explained, but some of the reasons for it are plain enough. Perhaps the chief was the leaders' uncertainty as to how many of their followers would strike at their command; certainly there was very little enthusiasm for a stoppage among the rank and file of the National Union of Railwaymen and the Transport Workers' Union. Moreover, Mr. Thomas explained later that he had reached the conviction that the Triple Alliance strike had in it all the "germs of a bloody upheaval"; he and his colleagues were not unanimous in support of all the miners' claims, and were not prepared in their interests to run the risk of a violent revolution, perhaps with the destruction of the monarchy and the establishment of a soviet government.¹⁰

The coal strike dragged on till July 4th. Of its course not much more need be said. It inflicted enormous damage on industry, and contributed disastrously to the spread of unemployment; but as time went on it interfered less and less with the absolutely vital industries, and fears of disorder also subsided. Early in June the army reserve, which had been called up, was demobilized, and the Defence Force, specially created by recruitment from the civil population, never had anything active to do. About the middle of June the miners' leaders sought to obtain the collaboration of other unions that were engaged in wage disputes, but in vain.

On June 28th the prime minister announced the settlement of the strike. Wages

were not to fall below the pre-war rate plus 25 per cent.; the standard profits were to be 17 per cent. of the standard wages: any surplus was to go 83 per cent. to the miners and 17 per cent. to the owners. These rules were to be applied by a national board and district boards, each consisting half of miners and half of owners, with an independent chairman. The national pool was given up, but the government subsidized the wage funds of the poorer districts to the extent of ten million pounds.

Thus ended a dispute of which the cost to the country was incalculable. The money losses involved have been estimated, but such estimates are of necessity so vague, and reach figures so vast, that to ordinary understanding they are hardly better than meaningless. Some indication of what they mean may be gathered from the fact that the output of coal in 1921 was the lowest since 1887, and of pig-iron the lowest since 1850, and from the increase in the figures of unemployment.

The coal strike was the end of a period in the history of the British people. There have been strikes enough since, and the chance that the parliamentary state might be mastered or superseded, more or less violently, by some sort of syndicalist or soviet organization, was no doubt exaggerated then and is not absolutely destroyed now. But at least in the middle of 1922 an end had come to one period of reliance on industrial, to the exclusion of properly political, action for influencing society and improving the world.

The Trade Union Position

For this there were many reasons. The trade slump reduced the resources of the unions in money and in membership. The relations between leaders and rank and file were often such as to make difficult any decisive and continuous policy. The same thing was true of the relations between unions; not only did a combination like the Triple Alliance crumble under the impact of reality, but also there was competition, often unfriendly, between unions covering the same fields and especially between the champions of craft organization

POSITION OF LABOUR

and the champions of organization by industries. Then the violent memories of war and the violent hopes of peace were tempered by the passage of time. The example of Russia had lost much of its glamour; living on the dole was neither joyous nor dignified, but it seemed that there were even worse things under the new dispensation. Here at least absolute starvation was rare, and the fact that something which was pretty near it was not uncommon tended as much to depress energy as to excite resentment. Nor was Russia the only country where the mass of the population was worse off than in

Great Britain; the whole of Central Europe fared as badly.

Lastly, the general election of 1918 had deprived the Labour leaders of all parliamentary importance; there had been the more reason to turn to industrial action; now they were deeply disillusioned about the results of such action, and they were much nearer again to the possibility of parliamentary effectiveness. There must be a new parliament soon, and there were not wanting signs of the dissolution of the Lloyd George coalition. Attention must now be directed to the causes and process of that dissolution.



SCENE IN HYDE PARK DURING THE GREAT RAILWAY STRIKE, 1919

Volunteers waiting to be allotted work.

From a Photograph by Alfieri.



BRITISH TROOPS FOR DEMOBILIZATION FROM GERMANY PROCEEDING TO THE TRANSPORT
AT ROTTERDAM

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

CHAPTER XIII

THE END OF THE COALITION

IT may be that no other government could, after expenditures so vast of men and money and energy and in a world so shaken and broken, have restored more swiftly or completely or with less friction the machinery of industry and commerce. Yet, as the months and years of peace succeeded each other and that restoration manifested itself slow and incomplete and painful, fewer and fewer were found to spread this qualified approval, and more and more were ready to believe and to preach, not only that the coalition government had done less than was decent to lessen the inevitable evils of the time, but even that it was itself responsible for most of them.

There were so many angles from which such accusations could be launched. It was said that the people were being debauched and pauperized by doles and pensions; and again, that the men who had fought and worked for victory were in return cut off by the wickedness of capitalism and the incompetence of government from all chance of making their way or even of preserving their self-respect. Strikes were multiplied by the weakness of the administration, its want of any policy more positive than acquiescence in blackmail; or, on the contrary, it was alleged that the rich were being allowed to grow richer while the poor grew poorer, that the poor man's body (his only capital) had



THE BRITISH ARMY OF OCCUPATION IN GERMANY

The Grenadier Guards at Cologne.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

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been conscripted while wealth had at the most been hired at excessive rates, and that now all the force of the State and all the cunning of politicians were constantly at the service of capital in all its contests with labour. Half a million houses at least were urgently needed, and building was held up because the government was frightened of the bricklayers, or because excessive State action was killing private enterprise, or because the State was shirking its manifest duty to engage itself in the building of houses. The government was introducing, slyly and gradually, the detested principles of Protection, induced by corrupt motives to desert the true economic gospel, lovely for its moral beauty and proved by two generations of profit; or, alternatively, unable to shake off the rusty fetters of Cobdenism and to cut out the canker of a morbid internationalism, it was perversely ignoring the lessons of the war and wantonly exposing Britain anew to commercial dangers which had long been debilitating and already once had gone near to be fatal.

The Vulnerable Coalition

Coalitions in politics are necessarily exposed to such attacks from two sides, no less damaging because they are often contradictory, and this one suffered from them more than most. Nor was it only in the economic sphere that its task was difficult and criticism of it easy: the difficulties there were enough to destroy the popularity of a government, but there were also difficulties scarcely less serious in other spheres. In this regard Irish policy and foreign policy were especially important.

Some indication has already been given of the lines along which the Versailles treaty could most easily be attacked, and it has been seen that the most damaging allegations against it were that it was a dereliction from the idealism which had won the German surrender, and that for all its betrayals of ideals it had not even the merit of conforming to realities. These accusations were the more damaging as one or other of them was exactly convenient to the extremists on either wing, while

both were causes of disquiet to many honest men in between: and both the accusations rather gained than lost weight as the process of time tempered indignation and revealed the difficulties of getting payment from Germany and of re-establishing a Europe that could be dealt with, either diplomatically or commercially.

The Unsettling Factor of Russia

Even in 1919, before the Treaty of Versailles was ratified, the difficulties that were inherent in it were becoming apparent and troublesome, and the questions that it had left unsolved were notoriously, sometimes even scandalously, lacking attention. Fiume compromised the dignity of the great powers and disturbed the adherents of arbitration and self-determination, but did not affect the British government particularly. The great gaps in the re-arrangement of the Near East were to have results of first-rate importance in domestic British history, but for a time the filling of them could be postponed, and for the purposes of British politics they could be treated almost as if they did not exist. Russia, on the other hand, was from the first a considerable factor in domestic controversy: not only because, as has been seen already, the left clamoured against the continued assistance of anti-Bolshevik enterprises, but also because the right was no less convinced that it was a moral duty and a British interest to make the attack on the revolutionary government effective, and outraged at Mr. Lloyd George's occasional inclination (which, besides, it found no difficulty in turning into ridicule) to reopen commercial relations with the land of bulging corn-bins.

There was still another reason why Russia provided an especially serious embarrassment: this was the divergence between the Russian interests of Britain and those of France. A very large share of the savings of the last generation of Frenchmen had been lent to Russia, and France was therefore suspicious of any movement towards the recognition of a government which did not regard the payment of Tsarist debts as a matter of course. To Britain, on the

THE REPARATIONS PROBLEM

other hand, Russia was interesting chiefly as a potential purchaser of manufactured goods and seller of raw materials, and therefore any step towards normal relations might appear profitable.

There was a similar and more formidable divergence between the British and French views of the reparations problem, the problem which was the main business, or at least the largest stumbling-block, of post-war European politics. The Versailles conference had merely postponed the difficulty. It was considerably aggravated by the American refusal to ratify the treaties: this deprived France of the Anglo-American insurance on which she had counted, and which had been represented to her as providing the safeguard which she had sought in the Rhine frontier; and having lost that asset she was the more determined to insist upon every possible exaction from prostrate but (as she held) not yet innocuous Germany. In Britain, on the contrary, there was a general and, if the make-Germany-pay agitation had been spontaneous, a very surprising scepticism and even indifference about German payments, and a growing sentiment not only that there was virtue in sparing the defeated, but also that one commercial state might find profit in the stabilization of another. France was the less inclined to sympathize with this generosity, as it became increasingly clear that Germany was insincere, or at least very unfortunate, in her attempts to make available for her reparation liabilities the maximum proportion of the wealth under her jurisdiction.

Personal changes, especially the resignations of Poincaré and Clemenceau from the presidency and premiership, also tended

to make Anglo-French relations more difficult. In March, 1920, there was a flagrant want of co-operation, when the German disorders, centring round the monarchist "putsch" of Dr. Kapp, led the French, without previous agreement with their



MR. LLOYD GEORGE, M. BRIAND, AND MARSHAL FOCH

From a Photograph by the Central News.

allies, to occupy Frankfurt and Darmstadt. In April, at the San Remo conference (one of a series of meetings between prime ministers, of which others were held at London, Boulogne, Hythe, Brussels, and Spa), it was agreed that the French occupation of Frankfurt and Darmstadt should cease as soon as the German troops in the Ruhr valley were reduced to the numbers specified in the treaty, and France was

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assured that there should be no revision of the treaty and that she should have full British support in enforcing German obligations. In July agreement was reached on the proportion of German payments to be received by each of the Allies—fifty-two per cent., for instance, by France, and twenty-

the anxiety of the German government, and especially of German capitalists, to evade payment. The sterling value of the mark went, from three hundred, as low as twelve hundred. When, in February, France and England did agree on their immediate demands, the result was a German refusal



THE BRITISH ARMY OF OCCUPATION IN GERMANY: AT THE BARRIER ON THE DÜSSELDORF ROAD

On the right are W.A.A.C officers in readiness to search women.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

two per cent. by the British Empire. But that was all that 1920 contributed to the solution of the reparations problem, and the year ended in general gloom both about Germany's power and will to pay and about Franco-British collaboration in the task of debt-collecting.

The next year did not improve the situation. The stiffening of French public opinion was reflected in the substitution of Briand for Leygues, in the prospect later that Briand in turn must give way to Poincaré. It became continually less easy to doubt

and allied occupation of more German towns. In April the Reparations Commission fixed the total sum to be paid by Germany at six thousand million pounds: threats to occupy the Ruhr valley forced the acceptance of this estimate by a new German government, and the payment of the first instalment of fifty millions. But serious friction continued between the allied governments, arising both from this question of enforcing payment and from the Upper Silesian plebiscite, as well as from grave differences of method and intention in the



THE BRITISH ARMY OF OCCUPATION IN GERMANY

Pipers leading the Guards across the Cathedral Square, Cologne.

From a Crown Copyright Photograph in the Imperial War Museum.

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Near East : in December the German government announced its incapacity to pay the next instalment, due in January, and the year ended with Monsieur Briand and Mr. Lloyd George despairing of agreement on the next step to be taken.

The Washington Conference

At the same time there was little to encourage those who looked to the co-operation of America or the guidance of the League of Nations for the salvation of Europe. President Harding withdrew his representative from the Council of Ambassadors, the permanent organ of allied diplomacy, and formally dissociated his country from responsibility for the territorial settlement arranged at Versailles ; and though the League of Nations proved useful (especially in the Upper Silesia affair), it was clear that the league had more to hope from the resettlement of Europe than the resettlement of Europe from it.

Yet there had been one real diplomatic advance in 1921 ; real, though later events have shown that it was not so great as was hoped at the time : this was the work of the Washington Conference.

The conference met, on the invitation of the United States, in November, and sat for three months. Its most important result was the limitation of naval armaments by fixing the maximum number and tonnage of capital ships to be maintained by each of the great naval powers, in the ratio roughly of ten each for the United States and the British Empire, six for Japan, and three each for France and Italy. There were provisions against further fortifications in the Pacific, and against the improper use of submarines in war ; and there was also, replacing the Anglo-Japanese alliance, a quadruple treaty (between Britain, the United States, France, and Japan) for settling disputes about the Pacific, and a treaty securing to China administrative integrity and to countries trading with her equality of opportunity.

This was a very considerable achievement. Great Britain, struggling to meet her obligations and to re-establish her prosperity, had reduced her naval expenditure so far

that she saw herself in danger of being outclassed by the United States and perhaps by Japan as well. From this danger she was now saved : the old two-power standard she had been forced to abandon, but at least she could maintain a one-power standard, and the one power on an equality with her was that one with which she could reasonably hope that she was least likely to be at war. And, besides, the danger that the Pacific might be the breeding-place of the next great war had been sensibly reduced.

Yet the achievement was not complete : the course of the conference, and especially the successful opposition to the absolute prohibition of submarine warfare, had aggravated the difficulties of Franco-British relations, and French unwillingness to ratify the disarmament treaty had the same effect.

Poincaré again becomes Premier

Nor were these difficulties lessened by contemporary diplomatic events. At the very beginning of the year Mr. Lloyd George met Monsieur Briand at Cannes ; the chief apparent effect was the fall of Monsieur Briand from power (largely because of his indiscretion in allowing himself to be photographed in the exotic and undemocratic employment of attempting to hit a golf-ball) and the accession to office of the much more rigid Poincaré, who was determined to insist upon the complete execution of the Versailles treaty. The insurance pact which Mr. Lloyd George had offered to Monsieur Briand as a consolation for the failure of the Anglo-Franco-American guarantee treaty came to nothing because the new French premier insisted that it should be reciprocal and that it should include promises of defined military assistance. Neither at Cannes nor in London, whither Monsieur Poincaré came in August, was any considerable progress made towards the solution of the reparations problem, which was indeed further complicated by the note of August 1 in which Lord Balfour, acting as foreign secretary, reminded the world that British indebtedness to America had been incurred largely in the interests of our allies, and indicated the intention of

TREATY OF SEVRES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

the British government to claim from its allies only so much of their debts as was necessary to meet its American obligations. The partial remittal of debt involved in this declaration was taken less as evidence of generosity than as an unwarranted threat of insistence on part payment.

The Genoa conference, the only positive result of the meeting at Cannes, brought together in April the representatives of thirty-four nations, for the purpose especially of re-establishing normal relations between Russia and Europe: it was successful with regard only to Russia and Germany, which states concluded an agreement cancelling all war indemnity claims, providing for the renewal of consular and diplomatic representation, and foreshadowing the arrangement of trade facilities.

Rise of Mustapha Kemal

If the reparations controversy was the main interest of European politics in the years immediately after the war, hardly less important (and of perhaps even more evident and more immediate effect on the British people, as precipitating the fall of the coalition government) were the disquiets and antagonisms which the peace conference had left in the Near East, and which had been aggravated by time and by the pre-occupations and disagreements of the great powers.

It was not till May 1, 1920, that the treaty which was to settle the fate of the Ottoman Empire was handed to the Turkish delegates, and even then more than three months elapsed before it was signed. Nor were the Turkish signatures obtained without fighting, which was successfully undertaken by the Greeks as the agents of allied policy; nor were they worth very much when they had been obtained. The delegates of the Ottoman Empire had secured some modifications of the draft treaty, but a document which left of Turkey in Europe nothing except Constantinople, which surrendered Smyrna to Greece, and Palestine and Mesopotamia to British mandates, which granted autonomy to Kurdistan and independence to Armenia, Arabia and Syria—such a document could hardly be acceptable to the

Turks, and in the event the nationalist organization under Mustapha Kemal, though for a time depressed by its defeat at the hands of the Greeks, drew from the severity of the Treaty of Sèvres the power to survive and develop till it was able effectively to challenge the authority of that instrument.

Neither British statesmen nor French, nor indeed any others, felt much confidence in the Treaty of Sèvres: their fears were redoubled by the return of Constantine to the throne of Greece and by the fall of Venizelos. Accordingly, both the Constantinople and the Angora (nationalist) government were invited to send representatives to a meeting of the Allied Supreme Council in March, 1921, where a revision of the treaty was considered but was found impracticable. The year 1921, in fact, produced no very definite modification of the situation, except to put beyond doubt the Kemalist claim to be the only effective Turkish government. Otherwise, there was an alliance between Angora and Moscow which for a time alarmed Europe but which by the end of the year was fast losing reality: separate agreements were concluded between Italy and Angora and between France and Angora, the chief effect of which (especially of the latter) was to attenuate still further the bonds of sympathy between the allied powers: and all the year there was fighting between Greek and Turkish forces—fighting of a not very conclusive character, but still conclusive enough to make the Greeks by the end of the year vainly anxious for peace.

Complications in the Near East

The year 1922 opened with the most urgent necessity for effecting some settlement in the Near East. Co-operation between Kemalists and Bolsheviks was again becoming closer. The Turkish inclinations of France and Italy threatened to make collaboration between the Allies utterly impossible, and endangered the position of the British force occupying Constantinople in accordance with the 1918 armistice. Mohammedan sympathies within the British Empire were also extremely disquieting. Defeat and revolution in Greece and the

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THE SINN FEIN DISTURBANCES IN IRELAND: A BARRICADE IN SACKVILLE STREET, DUBLIN

From a Photograph by E. Hulton & Co.

approach of the Turkish army might set the whole Balkan peninsula ablaze. Nevertheless it was still to take more than a year to reach agreement: yet at least something decisive was done, and the worst disasters were avoided.

In March the allied great powers at last brought themselves to concerted action. They proposed a three-months' armistice on the basis of Greek evacuation of Smyrna and all Asia Minor, which (as well as Constantinople and the most easterly part of Thrace) were to be restored to full Turkish sovereignty; Gallipoli, however, was to remain in allied occupation, and the shores of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles were to be demilitarized.

These terms were accepted by Greece and by the Porte, but the Angora government would not consent to an armistice till Anatolia should have been evacuated by the Greeks: it followed its refusal by launching an offensive which by the end of August had put the Greek army utterly to rout. By the middle of September Smyrna

was captured, and the victory celebrated by monstrous massacres and pillage, and Constantinople was threatened.

These events brought the British Empire within an ace of a definite breach with its allies, and of a difficult and unpopular war with an enemy who might recently have been considered to have been rendered innocuous for a generation. Mr. Lloyd George hastened to make clear the intentions of his government. On September 16th he announced that reinforcements were being sent to General Sir Charles Harington (commanding the allied forces at Constantinople), that the Balkan powers were being asked for assistance, and that the dominions were also being invited to send help.

The effectiveness of these measures was much endangered by the decisions of France and Italy to withdraw their troops to the European side of the Straits, and by the overwhelming evidence in Great Britain of general aversion to war. However, the foreign secretary, Lord Curzon, persuaded the allied powers to issue a joint invitation

THE RAPID RISE OF SINN FEIN

to Turkey and Greece to attend an armistice conference, and, thanks largely to the tact and firmness of General Harington, on October 11th an armistice was signed.

There for a time foreign relations may be left, until it becomes necessary to consider the part they played in bringing the coalition government to an end: some indication has already been given of the share in that process of economic and social factors: it remains to mention the other chief factor, the government of Ireland.

This is not the place to trace Irish developments from the Easter rebellion to the institution of the Free State, but yet some space must be devoted to them, if only enough to draw attention to their effect on the British people in destroying the cabinet which—if, as its enemies asserted, it had neither won the war nor made peace—had at least seen the war won and the peace signed.

The crushing of the Easter rebellion might

seem to have disarmed Sinn Fein, but yet the two years that followed saw the rapid development of that party till it dominated Ireland. In February, 1917, the first Sinn Feiner won a parliamentary election, and he owed his victory to his son's execution for participation in the rising. This and similar portents, combined with a desire to weaken the anti-British influence of Irishmen in America, induced Mr. Lloyd George (in spite of his failure the year before) to make one more effort at settlement even while the war was in progress. On May 16 he announced his willingness to provide for the immediate application of the act of 1914, subject to a five-years' exclusion of the north-eastern counties, or to facilitate the summoning of a convention of all Irish parties to agree upon a scheme of self-government. The Nationalist party had already suffered too much for its concessions to exclusion to be prepared for acceptance of the first of these devices. The second



THE FOUR COURTS, DUBLIN, AFTER THE ATTACK BY SINN FEINERS

From a Photograph by Sport & General.

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was vitiated by the improbability that Ulster would be satisfied with anything less than exclusion, and by Sinn Fein's boycott of the convention on the ground that it was a sham unless it were elective and unless its majority decisions were to be final: nevertheless it was attempted.

The only result was the strengthening

been certain. By that time the government of Ireland was complicated by a new difficulty. The great German offensive had begun, and Mr. Lloyd George introduced a conscription bill raising to fifty the military age in Great Britain. In these circumstances he felt it necessary to attempt the extension of conscription to Ireland.



AN ARMoured CAR PATROLLING SACKVILLE STREET, DUBLIN

From a Photograph by E. Hulton & Co.

of Sinn Fein. In order that the convention might meet "in an atmosphere of harmony and goodwill," all the persons imprisoned for their share in the rebellion were released. This was taken as a sign of fear: it therefore emboldened Sinn Fein at the same time as, by setting its leaders at liberty, it enabled that party to perfect and expand its organization. Sinn Fein's victory was marked by new electoral successes, and by John Redmond's withdrawal from the National Volunteers: its intentions were emphasized by the emergence of Mr. de Valera as its unchallenged leader.

In April, 1918, the failure of the convention became clear, as it had always

Coming on top of the failure of the convention, the death of John Redmond, the spread of disorder, and the new rise of Sinn Fein, the effect of this attempt was to unite all parties outside Ulster in a policy of resistance "by whatever means should seem most efficacious." It was the end of constitutionalism,¹ for resistance was successful: conscription became the law of the land, but it was never applied.

This effective resistance to the law had not merely enabled Sinn Fein finally to swamp the Nationalists but had also secured to it, at least for the time, the collaboration of the Roman hierarchy against what the bishops described as "an oppressive and



SCENE IN SACKVILLE STREET DURING A POLICE "RAID"

From a Photograph by E. Hulton & Co.

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inhuman law, which the Irish people have a right to resist by all the means that are consonant with the law of God." In the pledge which they directed all priests to administer to the faithful after mass they made no mention of the law of God: the form was this—"Denying the right of the British Government to enforce compulsory service in this country, we pledge ourselves solemnly to resist conscription by the most effective means at our disposal."²

Though, in face of such threats, the cabinet never felt itself strong enough to endeavour to put the statute into effect, yet the middle of 1918 saw a renewal of "strong government," heralded by the appointment of Lord French and Mr. Shortt to succeed Lord Wimborne and Mr. Duke as lord-lieutenant and chief secretary respectively. The chief feature of their administration was the rearrest of Mr. de Valera and other leading Sinn Feiners, justified by their revolutionary activities, which were evident enough, and by the allegation of a German intrigue, whose existence was never publicly made very clear.

Institution of "Dail Eireann"

Such was the situation in November, 1918, when the war was over and the war parliament dissolved. It had convinced British Unionists of the necessity of Home Rule, to judge at least from the manifesto which Mr. Bonar Law issued jointly with Mr. Lloyd George, and in which they declared it "a first object in British statesmanship to explore all practical paths towards the settlement of this grave and difficult question on the basis of self-government. But there are two paths which are closed—the one leading to a complete severance of Ireland from the British Empire, and the other the forcible submission of the six counties of Ulster to a Home Rule parliament against their will."

It was therefore with Sinn Fein in the ascendant and with the principle of the union abandoned that in December, 1918, a general election was held in Ireland on what almost amounted to manhood suffrage. It is said that there was a great deal of intimidation—how much cannot be accurately

estimated, but that there was some seems probable from the fact that in contested constituencies less than a third of the electors actually voted.³ At any rate there was no doubt about the result: of the 105 seats 73 went to Sinn Feiners and 26 to Unionists. The 73 were pledged not to attend the British parliament. In January, 1919, such of them as were not in prison formed in Dublin an assembly which called itself "Dail Eireann," and took an oath of allegiance to "Saorstát na h-Eireann," the Irish Republic or, more literally, the Free State of Ireland. Mr. de Valera was chosen president and a provisional ministry was formed.

Supremacy of Sinn Fein

These proceedings and the subsequent levying of contributions which amounted to a general taxation were revolutionary, and might have been expected to evoke systematic repression. Yet such was not, for a considerable time, their effect. Ireland was prosperous, and at first orderly: Mr. Lloyd George was busy with the peace conference: there was a notion, which received some support from America, though not from its president, that the whole question might be submitted to that conference: Sinn Fein at first disavowed the use of force, though British military units were raided for arms and a general boycott of the police was declared.

In spite of the disavowal of force, as the year went on killings became frequent. The government had again tried to create an atmosphere of reconciliation by releasing the interned Sinn Feiners, but it could hardly not arrest persons engaged in the fiscal activities of a revolutionary organization, and arrests led to attempts at rescue which sometimes ended fatally. The police, treated as traitors in the pay of an invader and therefore legitimately subject to any murderous device, found their patience and discipline sorely tried.

Yet in the event the first act of reprisal was the work of soldiers. In September the comrades of a Shropshire Light Infantryman murdered on his way to church wrecked the shops of the jurymen who had found

THE "BLACK-AND-TANS"

that he died from "a bullet wound caused by a person unknown," though it is not recorded that they extended their vengeance to the coroner, who had described the attack as "an act of actual warfare" which "it would take military strategy of the highest order to equal."

One more attempt was made to reach a settlement within the boundaries of legality and parliamentarism. In December, 1919, a bill to amend the Home Rule Act of 1914 was introduced, and a year later it became law. Its provisions need no detailed consideration: their essence was the institution of one parliament for southern Ireland and another for the six north-eastern counties, with a council that should provide an element of unity and a possibility of making unity complete when it should be generally desired. In June, 1921, the parliament of Ulster met: but Sinn Fein was resolved that southern Ireland should not accept a parliament from England, and Sinn Fein's resolution was decisive.

Meanwhile outrage and reprisal had multiplied till Ireland was devastated by a civil war (if it deserve a name so flattering) of the most destructive and atrocious kind. During 1919 killing was sporadic: in 1920 Sinn Fein began to be a government, if not absolutely effective at least more effective than the old one: it captured local administration: its courts had no lack of suitors: its army (the I.R.A.) checked the driving of cattle and the seizing of farms: and its policy was to use every kind of force to make the position of the British intolerable, so that they might be the more amenable to the American intervention for which it still hoped.

In the last eight months of 1919 eighteen policemen were killed; in 1920, 176 policemen and 54 soldiers, besides many civilians;⁴ in the first quarter of 1921, five hundred

persons, of whom about a third were members of the forces.⁵

Systematic attempts at repression began in April, 1920, when Sir Hamar Greenwood became chief secretary. The ranks of the R.I.C. were filled; an auxiliary police force,



MEN OF THE AUXILIARY IRISH POLICE: "BLACK-AND-TANS"

From a Photograph by E. Hulton & Co.

fifteen mobile companies of a hundred men each, was created; and the number of troops in Ireland raised to sixty thousand. These measures were largely effective in restoring the authority of the Crown; but they had their disadvantages. The new recruits (called the Black-and-Tans, from their parti-coloured uniforms) were guilty sometimes of measures of vengeance and sometimes of breaches of the law of property which did not become the champions of order and legality. How frequent such transgressions were cannot be

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GROUP OF SINN FEIN DELEGATES TO THE PEACE CONVENTION

Front Row.—Mr. de Valera and Mr. Arthur Griffith. *Rear.*—Count Plunkett, Mr. Erskine Childers, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mrs. Farman, Dr. Farman, Miss O'Brennan, Mr. R. Barton and Miss K. O'Connell.

From a Photograph by Alfieri.

known : on the whole it seems fair to conclude that they were rare relatively to the conditions, and that they soon began to become rarer. Nevertheless they were frequent enough to be deplorable, and (in combination with the "official reprisals" by which occasionally a whole neighbourhood was punished for crimes committed in it) to enable the Sinn Feiners, their sympathizers in America, and a considerable section of the English press to raise a clamour which seriously embarrassed the government.

The government was embarrassed, but as yet it showed no sign of yielding. On April 19th, 1921, Mr. Lloyd George publicly defined his attitude. When all English parties were ready to give Ireland home rule, Sinn Féin demanded a republic for the whole

island and deliberately wrecked all chance of settlement by conciliatory or constitutional methods : outrage and assassination were the methods which it deliberately chose : the policy of Sinn Féin and the policy of the government were irreconcilable, because an Irish republic was incompatible both with British security and with Irish peace ; on everything else the government was ready for compromise, but so long as Sinn Féin believed that it could win a republic by continuing its present methods, settlement was impossible.

Sinn Féin did not alter its beliefs or its methods, but before long it was beginning to be suspected that the government was becoming less intransigent. The appointment, under the new act, of the first Roman Catholic lord lieutenant illustrated the end

THE IRISH PEACE TREATY

of the idea of a Protestant union. The king's visit to the northern parliament and his plea for agreement made some impression not only in Britain but in Ireland as well. It was believed that private negotiations had already been begun between the government and the Sinn Fein leaders.

On June 27th open negotiations were initiated by a letter from Mr. Lloyd George inviting Mr. de Valera and Sir James Craig (the Ulster premier) to a conference in London.

It took nearly six months before agreement was reached. At last on December 6th a treaty was signed between the plenipotentiaries of Sinn Fein on the one side and on the other ministers representing both the Liberal and the Unionist wings of the coalition government.

Ireland was to have "the same constitutional status in the Community of

Nations known as the British Empire as the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa." Her coasts were to be defended and controlled by the British navy, but her own government was to command all the land forces within her borders. In finance she was independent, though liable for a just share of the national debt. Members of the parliament of the Free State were to take an oath promising "true faith and allegiance to the constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established," and that they would be "faithful to H.M. King George V, his heirs and successors by law, in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations."



THREE DELEGATES TO THE IRISH PEACE CONVENTION: EARL BALFOUR,
SIR J. CRAIG (ULSTER) AND LORD LONDONDERRY

From a Photograph by Alfieri.

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LORD BIRKENHEAD

A signatory of the Irish Peace Treaty.

From a Photograph by Hay Wrightson.

As for the six counties, they would keep their own parliament either in its then existing relation to the parliament at Westminster or in the same relation to the Dublin parliament. In the former, which proved to be the actual, case, a commission was to determine the boundaries between north and south "in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, so far as may be compatible with economic and geographic considerations."

The treaty was ratified by the Dail, British troops were withdrawn, and England had washed her hands of Ireland—how clean, each man may judge. Mr. de Valera found the terms unacceptable, and carried a large section of the I.R.A. with him in opposition. The reasons for this and the results of it are matters for the Irish rather than the British historian; except in so far as developments in Great Britain were affected by the waging in Ireland between Republicans and Free Staters of a war even more deadly and destructive than had

been the struggle of Sinn Fein against the Union.

The most evident and immediate effect was to weaken still further the apparently moribund coalition. Something has been said already of the other causes, especially in foreign politics and in the economic sphere, which were undermining the Lloyd George government: they had gone so far that even by the end of 1921 the majority in the House of Commons rested on no active agreement or positive principle. The function of Ireland in this process was to bring into effectiveness a party which wanted the end of the coalition, which knew why it wanted it, and which felt a genuine moral indignation shared by the majority of Conservatives and at least understood and respected by the bulk of the nation.

Already by the beginning of 1922 it was clear that the extinction of the coalition was imminent. Most of the Conservatives, who provided very nearly three-quarters of the government's support in the House of



RT. HON. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

A signatory of the Irish Peace Treaty.

From a Photograph by Russell, London.

months from the date hereof.

18. This instrument shall be submitted forthwith by His Majesty's Government for the approval of Parliament and by the Irish signatories to a meeting summoned for the purpose of the members elected to sit in the House of Commons of Southern Ireland, and if approved shall be ratified by the necessary legislation.

Dec 6th 1921.

On behalf of the
Central Delegation

Robert Lloyd
Robert Lloyd

Birkenhead.

On behalf of the Irish
Delegation

Michael Collins Michael Collins

Michael Collins
Michael Collins

E. S. O'Sullivan

Supp. Collins - Collins

Michael Collins

Michael Collins

Michael Collins

SIGNATURES ON THE IRISH PEACE TREATY

From a Photograph by the Central News.

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Commons, had once, or even always, disliked and distrusted Mr. Lloyd George, and since the war these feelings had not lacked nourishment. A section of Conservative journalists and parliamentarians, which was made formidable more by earnestness than by numbers, railed bitterly and incessantly

Ireland had been given, or more truly had taken, a form of home rule which was hardly distinguishable from absolute independence and which the men at the head of the Irish government avowedly regarded as a step towards that goal. More reprehensible and more galling to the Unionists than the fact of the surrender were its manner and its motives. It was certain enough that at least as much peace as was got now could have been had sooner for smaller concessions. It was very probable that at almost any stage the rebellion might have been crushed if only the government had been resolute and single-minded. It was undeniable that violence of the most criminal kind, unless the objects of Sinn Fein sanctified all means, had been given the justification of success. It was extremely difficult for an Englishman to face a southern Unionist, or even an Ulsterman, without sensations of shame.

Nor were constitutional considerations wanting to aggravate dislike of the peace treaty. The oath which it imposed was equally difficult to understand and to defend, and the members of Dail Eireann made no secret of the low esteem in which they held it nor of their contempt for the Crown. How could the very notion of a treaty between one part of the United Kingdom and another be fitted into the constitution? It was very doubtful whether the strategic safeguards sufficed for security.

And then, it was all very well to say that Ireland had been put into the same constitutional relation with Britain as Canada or Australia: their previous history and their physical relations were very different. The dominions had lately acquired an international status if not independent at least individual. They had a corporate sentiment which, if it might not keep them eternally British, at least predisposed them not to be anti-British. No one doubted that if Canada chose to secede she would be allowed to do so.



against the men especially responsible for the Irish treaty—Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Churchill, Lord Birkenhead, and Mr. Austen Chamberlain.

This indignation was dangerous because it was real and because it was moral. Most Conservative members of parliament, and even most Conservative ministers, if they did not share the indignation, at least felt an uneasy doubt whether they ought not to share it. After all, they were the Unionist party, they formed three-quarters of the administration's voting strength, and yet

END OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT

Was it conceivable that Ireland, any more than Scotland or Cornwall, should be allowed to do so?

But it is worth while insisting that the main reason for the indignation aroused by the treaty was moral. The "Die-Hards" and the men whom they influenced really did believe that murder and arson and robbery were detestable, and that timidly to allow them to be politically profitable involved a damnation scarcely less absolute than the employment of them as political weapons. With these beliefs it is difficult to quarrel. Whether the activities of Sinn Fein are properly so described, and whether in any case the Lloyd George government chose the lesser of two evils, these questions each man may decide for himself.

At any rate, these considerations made it difficult for Mr. Lloyd George to go on as a prime minister kept in office by Conservative support: nor did they lose their importance as time went on, for the year after the treaty brought no peace to Ireland, but more waste of lives and goods even than before.

The beginning of 1922 brought evidence of the weakening of the prime minister's position. Feeling that his popularity was running out, he began preparations to secure a new lease of power by winning a general election before it should be too late. His plans were frustrated by the veto of the chairman of the Unionist organization, and the election was not held.

The government could be attacked on other grounds besides its dealings with Ireland. The year 1922 was less troubled with industrial disputes than those just before it, and Great Britain might boast that she was recovering from her five years of war with as little delay as could reasonably be expected: yet there were still poverty and unemployment enough to make of Mr. Lloyd George's millennial promises a jest whose bitterness everyone could taste. It was true that British finances ran less risk of speedy bankruptcy than any others in Europe, but taxation was still fantastically heavy: in the hope of lightening it a committee of business men under the chairmanship of Sir Eric Geddes had been appointed

to advise the government as to possible reductions of expenditure, a casual supersession of the treasury of which both the propriety and the effectiveness were very generally doubted.

Then the government's foreign policy had long ceased, justly or unjustly, to be a source of popularity. It might be reckoned a success to have avoided an open



MICHAEL COLLINS

One of the Sinn Fein signatories to the Irish Peace Treaty.

From a Photograph by the London News Agency.

and final breach with France; but it had involved at least an appearance of ineffectiveness, and the reprobation alike of the lovers of France and of the friends of Germany. There were some still left to regret that the Kaiser lived on, and many more to be ashamed that there had ever been talk of hanging him. Few continued to hope that the cost of the war might yet be transferred to Germany; but Mr. Lloyd George suffered from the contrast between the promises of reparations and the prospect that Britain alone would pay her debts and that no one would pay Britain. For the result of the Washington conference, which might be reckoned a pure success, and not a small one, the government received

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curiously little credit: it received much less credit for having avoided war with Turkey than discredit for having come so near to it.

Such were some of the reasons which, as the autumn revealed a growing Unionist demand for independence, left the coalition leaders defenceless. Most important of all reasons, and indeed embracing many of the rest, was the feeling that cabinet government had been destroyed, that there was an unprecedented subordination of ministers to the premier, and that premier the leader only of a small minority.

On October 19th the Unionist revolt won its decisive victory. A meeting of Unionist members of the House of Commons was held to decide whether or not the party should remain faithful to the coalition. The issue, if it was ever in doubt, was decided partly by a Conservative by-election

victory two days before, and much more by Mr. Bonar Law's emergence from convalescence to recommend withdrawal from the coalition.

In the middle of November a general election returned to the new House of Commons three hundred and forty-seven Unionists, with a majority of more than seventy over all other parties combined. Great Britain had returned to the ways that she knew—the government of a single party which controlled parliament. But it was a changed parliament: the Irish had gone, and the Labour party had arrived, had become the second largest party in the lower house. It had a capacity for expansion which the Nationalists had always lacked. The normal English government, with its absolute majority in the House of Commons, had been re-established: how long was it to last?

BY THE KING.

A PROCLAMATION.

FOR DISSOLVING THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT, AND DECLARING THE
CALLING OF ANOTHER.

WHEREAS We have thought fit, by and with the advice of Our Privy Council, to dissolve this present Parliament: We do, on that Head, publish this Our Royal Proclamation; and do hereby dissolve the said Parliament accordingly. And the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses, and the Commissioners for Shires and Boroughs, of the House of Commons, are discharged from further Attendance thereat: And We being desirous and resolved, as soon as may be to meet Our People, and to have their Advice in Parliament, do hereby make known to all Our loving Subjects Our Royal Will and Pleasure to call a new Parliament: And do hereby further declare, that, by, and with the Advice of Our Privy Council We have given Order that Our Chancellor of that Part of our United Kingdom called Great Britain and Our Lord Lieutenant of Ireland do respectively, upon Notice thereof, forthwith issue out Writs, in the Form and according to Law, for calling a new Parliament: And We do hereby also, by this Our Royal Proclamation under Our Great Seal of Our United Kingdom, require Writs forthwith to be issued accordingly by Our said Chancellor, and Lord Lieutenant respectively, for causing the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons who are to serve in the said Parliament to be duly returned to, and to give their Attendance in, Our said Parliament on Monday the Twentieth day of November next, which Writs are to be issued in due and lawful manner.

Given at Our Court at Saint James's, this
Twenty-sixth day of October, in the year of our Lord
1922, the one hundred and twenty-two, and in the
Thirtieth year of Our Reign.

GOD SAVE THE KING.



ROYAL PROCLAMATION DISSOLVING PARLIAMENT,
OCTOBER 26, 1922

From a Photograph by Barratt.

APPENDIX I

NOTES TO TEXT REFERENCES

CHAPTER I

1. Quoted from *The Kaiser's Letters to the Tsar* in G. P. Gooch's *History of Modern Europe*, 1878-1919, p. 302.
2. Quoted in Gooch, p. 311.
3. Quoted in Gooch, p. 312.
4. Quoted in Gooch, p. 386.
5. Lord Haldane, *Before the War*, p. 30.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
7. *Annual Register*, 1911, p. 182.
8. Haldane, p. 64, and H. H. Asquith, *The Genesis of the War*, p. 55.
9. R. Poincaré, *Origines de la Guerre*, p. 73, and Asquith, p. 60.
10. Asquith, pp. 95, 109, 86.

CHAPTER II

1. Asquith, *The Genesis of the War*, p. 189.
2. W. S. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 1911-14, p. 214.
3. Asquith, p. 203.
4. Gooch, *History of Modern Europe*, p. 545.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 548; Asquith, p. 209.
6. Churchill, p. 217, and Gooch, p. 550.
7. Churchill, p. 220.
8. H. N. Brailsford, *The War of Steel and Gold*, p. 187 ff.
9. G. D. H. Cole, *Labour and the War*, p. 22 ff.
10. Cf. also I. C. Willis, *How we Went Into the War*.

CHAPTER III

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2. J. Buchan, *History of the Great War*, pp. 159 and 172.
3. *The Times History of the Great War*, Vol. I, p. 474.

4. Quoted in the *Quarterly Review*, Vol. CCIIL, p. 140.
5. A. E. Housman, *On an Army of Mercenaries*, *The Times*, Oct. 31, 1917.
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8. Churchill, p. 281.
9. M. B. Hammond, *British Labour Conditions*.
10. Hammond, *op. cit.*, and G. D. H. Cole, *Labour and the War*.
11. Quoted in Hammond from *Labour Gazette*, 1915, p. 300.

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2. Roch, *Mr. Lloyd George and the War*, p. 106.
3. Callwell, *Experiences of a Dug-Out*, p. 89; W. S. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 1915.
4. Churchill, p. 97 *et seq.*
5. Churchill, p. 197 *et seq.*
6. Cf. Buchan, *History of the Great War*, Vol. II, p. 32.
7. Roch, p. 117.
8. G. D. H. Cole, *Trade Unions and Munitions*, p. 76.
9. Roch, p. 129.

CHAPTER V

1. W. S. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 1915, p. 382 *et seq.*
2. Cf. (not for these opinions, but for their accounts of the facts) M. B. Hammond, *British Labour Conditions and Legislation during the War*; G. D. H. Cole,

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Labour in War Time, and Trade Unionism and Munitions.

3. H. Wolfe, *Labour Supply and Regulation*.
4. Basil Williams, *The Raising and Training of the New Armies*, p. 23 *et seq.*
5. Roch, *Mr. Lloyd George and the War*, p. 137 *et seq.*

CHAPTER VI

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2. J. A. Salter, *Allied Shipping Control*, e.g. pp. 29, 43, 53.
3. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 1915, p. 581.
4. Cf. W. A. Phillips, *The Revolution in Ireland*; G. A. McKenzie, *The Irish Rebellion*; J. Stephens, *The Insurrection in Dublin*.
5. W. B. Wells and N. Marlowe, *A History of the Irish Rebellion*.
6. Phillips, p. 105.
7. Jellicoe, *The Grand Fleet*, p. 412.

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2. J. Buchan, Vol. III, p. 7.
3. Sir William Robertson, according to C. A'C. Repington, *The First World War*, 1914-18, Vol. I, p. 345.
4. Quoted in I. C. Willis, *How we Got On with the War*, p. 53.
5. For the details that follow, cf. an anonymous article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for February, 1919, and Walter Roch, *Mr. Lloyd George and the War*.

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2. For the German note see G. L. Dickinson, *Peace Proposals and War Aims*, p. 1.
3. Page, Vol. II, p. 212; cf. J. W. Gerard (*My Four Years in Germany*, p. 264), who, on January 6, "knew almost to

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7. S. Litman, *Prices and Price Control*, p. 110 *et seq.*
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9. J. A. Salter, *Allied Shipping Control*, p. 348.
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3. Repington, *The First World War*, Vol. II, p. 222.
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7. Maurice, p. 39 *et seq.*
8. G. A. B. Dewar, *Sir Douglas Haig's Command*, Vol. II, p. 115.
9. Leading article in *The Times* quoted by Roch, p. 215.
10. Dewar, Vol. II, pp. 218, 224.
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1. The resolutions are set out in the appendix to *The New Protection* by J. A. Hobson.
2. *The Annual Register*, 1918, p. 157.
3. Cf. A. E. Zimmern, *Europe in Convalescence*, p. 114; *Cambridge History of Foreign Policy*, p. 525 *et seq.*; and *The History of the Peace Conference*.
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7. *The Annual Register*, 1920, p. 104.
8. A. L. Bowley, *Prices and Wages in the United Kingdom*, 1914-20, p. 17.
9. Quoted by Bowley, p. 106.
10. Cf. his evidence in his libel action against *The Communist*.

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3. E. L. Bogart, *Direct and Indirect Costs of the Great War*.

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2. W. Alison Phillips, *The Revolution in Ireland*, 1906-23, p. 142.
3. Phillips, p. 153, quoted from *The Times*, 17-1-1919.
4. Phillips, p. 174.
5. Gwynn, p. 529.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE references in the text may sufficiently indicate my debts to printed sources, though references are given only when the debts are so specific that without acknowledgment they would have been thefts, and where statements have been made which, unconfirmed, would be specially open to doubt. My debts to individuals are chiefly to Sir Geoffrey Butler, K.B.E., junior burgess of the University of Cambridge, and fellow and lecturer of Corpus Christi College; to Mr. H. W. V. Temperley, Reader in Modern History in the same University, and fellow of Peterhouse; and to Mr. Stephen Gaselce, Librarian and Keeper of the Papers at the Foreign Office, and fellow of Magdalene College: of whom all three made valuable suggestions, and the first two had the extreme kindness to read my book in manuscript.

APPENDIX II

LISTS OF CABINETS, ETC., FROM 1914 TO 1922

THE CABINET—AUGUST, 1914

Asquith, Herbert Henry	<i>Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury</i>
Haldane of Cloan, Viscount	<i>Lord High Chancellor</i>
¹ Morley of Blackburn, Viscount	<i>Lord President of the Council</i>
Crewe, Marquess of	<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>
George, David Lloyd	<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>
McKenna, Reginald	<i>Secretary of State for Home Affairs</i>
Grey, Sir Edward	<i>Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs</i>
Harcourt, Lewis Vernon	<i>Secretary of State for the Colonies</i>
² Seely, Colonel J. E. B.	<i>Secretary of State for War</i>
Crewe, Marquess of	<i>Secretary of State for India</i>
Churchill, Winston Spencer	<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>
³ Buxton, Sydney	<i>President of the Board of Trade</i>
⁴ Burns, John	<i>President of the Local Government Board</i>
Pease, Joseph Albert	<i>President of the Board of Education</i>
Runciman, Walter	<i>President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries</i>
Birrell, Augustine	<i>Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland</i>
Samuel, Herbert	<i>Postmaster-General</i>
Wood, Thomas McKinnon	<i>Secretary for Scotland</i>
Hobhouse, Charles Edward Henry	<i>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster</i>
Beauchamp, Earl	<i>First Commissioner of Works</i>
Simon, Sir John Allsebrook	<i>Attorney-General</i>

THE COALITION CABINET—MAY, 1915

Asquith, Herbert Henry	<i>Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury</i>
Buckmaster, Lord	<i>Lord High Chancellor</i>
Crewe, Marquess of	<i>Lord President of the Council</i>

- (¹) Viscount Morley resigned at the beginning of the war, and was succeeded by Earl Beauchamp. Lord Emmott succeeded the latter as First Commissioner of Works.
- (²) Colonel Seely resigned, and was succeeded by Earl Kitchener of Khartoum.
- (³) Mr. Sydney Buxton resigned, and was succeeded by Mr. Walter Runciman. Lord Lucas succeeded the latter as President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, but without a seat in the Cabinet.
- (⁴) Mr. John Burns resigned at the beginning of the war, and was succeeded by Mr. Herbert Samuel. Mr. Charles Edward Henry Hobhouse succeeded the latter as Postmaster-General. Mr. Charles Frederick Gurney Masterman was appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in place of Mr. Hobhouse.

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Curzon of Kedleston, Earl	<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>
McKenna, Reginald	<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>
¹ Simon, Sir John Allsebrook	<i>Secretary of State for Home Affairs</i>
Grey, Sir Edward	<i>Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs</i>
Law, Andrew Bonar	<i>Secretary of State for the Colonies</i>
Kitchener of Khartoum, Earl	<i>Secretary of State for War</i>
Chamberlain, Austen	<i>Secretary of State for India</i>
Balfour, Arthur James	<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>
Runciman, Walter	<i>President of the Board of Trade</i>
Long, Walter	<i>President of the Local Government Board</i>
Henderson, Arthur	<i>President of the Board of Education</i>
Selborne, Earl of	<i>President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries</i>
² Birrell, Augustine	<i>Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland</i>
Samuel, Herbert	<i>Postmaster-General</i>
Wood, Thomas McKinnon	<i>Secretary for Scotland</i>
³ Churchill, Winston Spencer	<i>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster</i>
Harcourt, Lewis Vernon	<i>First Commissioner of Works</i>
⁴ Carson, Sir Edward	<i>Attorney-General</i>
⁵ George, David Lloyd	<i>Minister of Munitions</i>
Lansdowne, Marquess of	<i>Minister without portfolio</i>

THE COALITION CABINET—1916 TO 1918

THE MINISTRY WAS FORMED IN DECEMBER

George, David Lloyd	<i>Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury</i>
Finlay of Nairn, Lord	<i>Lord High Chancellor</i>
Curzon of Kedleston, Earl	<i>Lord President of the Council</i>
Crawford and Balcarres, Earl of	<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>
Law, Andrew Bonar	<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>
Cave, Sir George	<i>Secretary of State for Home Affairs</i>
Balfour, Arthur James	<i>Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs</i>
Long, Walter	<i>Secretary of State for the Colonies</i>
⁶ Derby, Earl of	<i>Secretary of State for War</i>
⁷ Chamberlain, Austen	<i>Secretary of State for India</i>
⁸ Carson, Sir Edward	<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>
Stanley, Sir Albert	<i>President of the Board of Trade</i>

- (¹) Sir John Simon resigned, and Mr. Herbert Samuel succeeded to the post on January 11, 1916. Mr. J. A. Pease succeeded the latter as Postmaster-General.
- (²) Mr. Augustine Birrell resigned, May 3, 1916.
- (³) Mr. Winston Churchill resigned, November, 1915, and was succeeded by Mr. Herbert Samuel, who was replaced by Mr. Edwin Samuel Montagu, January, 1916.
- (⁴) Sir Edward Carson resigned, October, 1915, and was succeeded by Sir F. E. Smith in November, 1915.
- (⁵) Mr. Lloyd George was appointed to this new post, May, 1915.
- (⁶) The Earl of Derby resigned, and was succeeded by Viscount Milner.
- (⁷) Mr. Austen Chamberlain resigned, and was succeeded by Mr. E. S. Montagu. The former joined the War Cabinet as Minister without portfolio, in April, 1918.
- (⁸) Sir Edward Carson resigned, and Sir Eric Geddes succeeded him.

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¹ Rhondda, Lord	<i>President of the Local Government Board</i>
Fisher, Herbert A. L.	<i>President of the Board of Education</i>
Prothero, Rowland E.	<i>President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries</i>
² Duke, Henry Edward	<i>Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland</i>
Illingworth, Albert H.	<i>Postmaster-General</i>
Munro, Robert	<i>Secretary for Scotland</i>
³ Cawley, Sir Frederick	<i>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster</i>
Mond, Sir Alfred	<i>First Commissioner of Works</i>
Smith, Sir Frederick Edwin	<i>Attorney-General</i>
⁴ Addison, Christopher	<i>Minister of Munitions</i>
⁵ Cecil, Lord Robert	<i>Minister of Blockade</i>
⁶ Hodge, John	<i>Minister of Labour</i>
Devonport, Lord	<i>Minister of Food Control</i>
Barnes, George N.	<i>Minister of Pensions</i>
Maclay, Sir Joseph P.	<i>Shipping Controller</i>
⁷ Chamberlain, Neville	<i>Director-General of National Service</i>
⁸ Cowdray, Viscount	<i>President of the Air Ministry</i>

THE WAR CABINET—1916 TO 1918

David Lloyd George, Earl Curzon of Kedleston, Andrew Bonar Law, *Lieutenant-General J. C. Smuts, *Viscount Milner, *Arthur Henderson.

Mr. George N. Barnes succeeded Mr. Arthur Henderson in August, 1917. Mr. Austen Chamberlain succeeded Viscount Milner in April, 1918.

THE COALITION CABINET AFTER THE GENERAL ELECTION, 1918.

George, David Lloyd	<i>Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury</i>
Birkenhead, Lord	<i>Lord High Chancellor</i>
Curzon, Marquess	<i>Lord President of the Council</i>
Law, Andrew Bonar	<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>
Chamberlain, Austen	<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>

- (1) Lord Rhondda resigned, and Mr. W. Hayes Fisher succeeded him. The former replaced Lord Devonport as Minister of Food Control. Mr. J. R. Clynes was appointed Food Controller in 1918.
- (2) Mr. Duke resigned, and was succeeded by Mr. Edward Shortt, K.C.
- (3) Lord Beaverbrook later held this post in conjunction with that of Minister of Propaganda. Lord Downham was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1918.
- (4) Dr. Addison resigned, to become Minister of Reconstruction, and was succeeded by Mr. Winston Churchill.
- (5) Lord Robert Cecil (Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs) was appointed Minister of Blockade, a new post created specially for the war, February, 1916.
- (6) Mr. John Hodge resigned, to become Minister of Pensions in place of Mr. George Barnes, in August, 1917, the latter being appointed to the War Cabinet as Minister without portfolio. Mr. Hodge was replaced at the Ministry of Labour by Mr. G. H. Roberts.
- (7) Mr. Neville Chamberlain resigned, and Sir Auckland Geddes succeeded him.
- (8) Viscount Cowdray resigned, and the post was held successively by Lord Rothermere and Sir William Weir.

* Ministers without portfolio.

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Shortt, Edward, K.C.	<i>Secretary of State for Home Affairs</i>
Balfour, Arthur James	<i>Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs</i>
Milner, Viscount	<i>Secretary of State for the Colonies</i>
Churchill, Winston Spencer	<i>Secretary of State for War and Air</i>
Montagu, Edwin Samuel	<i>Secretary of State for India</i>
Long, Walter	<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>
Stanley, Sir Albert	<i>President of the Board of Trade</i>
Fisher, Herbert A. L.	<i>President of the Board of Education</i>
Ernle, Lord	<i>President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries</i>
Macpherson, Ian	<i>Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland</i>
Munro, Robert	<i>Secretary for Scotland</i>
Horne, Sir Robert S.	<i>Minister of Labour</i>
Geddes, Sir Eric	<i>Minister without portfolio</i>

Later in the new session, the Ministry was reconstructed. Several offices created for the war were continued for post-war administration, but the Ministers holding these portfolios were not included in the Cabinet :—

Inverforth, Lord	<i>Minister of Munitions</i>
Maclay, Sir Joseph P.	<i>Minister of Shipping</i>
¹ Roberts, G. H.	<i>Minister of Food Control</i>
² Evans, Sir L. Worthington	<i>Minister of Pensions</i>

Other Ministers not included in the Cabinet :—

Crawford and Balcarres, Earl of	<i>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster</i>
Mond, Sir Alfred	<i>First Commissioner of Works</i>
Hewart, Sir Gordon	<i>Attorney-General</i>
Illingworth, Albert H.	<i>Postmaster-General</i>

THE WAR CABINET*—FEBRUARY, 1919

David Lloyd George, Earl Curzon of Kedleston, Andrew Bonar Law, Austen Chamberlain, George N. Barnes, Lieutenant-General J. C. Smuts.

THE COALITION CABINET—RE-FORMED OCTOBER, 1919, TO 1921

George, David Lloyd	<i>Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury</i>
Birkenhead, Lord	<i>Lord High Chancellor</i>
Balfour, Arthur James	<i>Lord President of the Council</i>
³ Law, Andrew Bonar	<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>
Chamberlain, Austen	<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>
Shortt, Edward, K.C.	<i>Secretary of State for Home Affairs</i>
Curzon of Kedleston, Earl	<i>Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs</i>

(¹) Mr. G. H. Roberts succeeded Mr. J. R. Clynes.

(²) Sir L. Worthington Evans succeeded Mr. John Hodge.

(³) Mr. Bonar Law resigned, in March, 1921, on account of ill-health, and was succeeded by Mr. Austen Chamberlain, who vacated his post of Chancellor of the Exchequer to Sir Robert Horne, Minister of Labour. The last-mentioned office was then filled by Dr. T. J. Macnamara.

* Dissolved in October, 1919.

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¹ Milner, Viscount	<i>Secretary of State for the Colonies</i>
Churchill, Winston Spencer	<i>Secretary of State for War and Air</i>
² Montagu, Edwin Samuel	<i>Secretary of State for India</i>
³ Long, Walter	<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>
Geddes, Sir Auckland	<i>President of the Board of Trade</i>
Fisher, Herbert A. L.	<i>President of the Board of Education</i>
Lee of Fareham, Lord	<i>President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries</i>
Macpherson, Ian	<i>Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland</i>
Munro, Robert	<i>Secretary for Scotland</i>
Horne, Sir Robert S.	<i>Minister of Labour</i>
⁴ Addison, Christopher, M.D.	<i>Minister of Health</i>
Geddes, Sir Eric C.	<i>Minister of Transport</i>
Barnes, George N.	<i>Minister without portfolio</i>

THE LAST COALITION CABINET—1922

George, David Lloyd	<i>Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury</i>
Birkenhead, Lord	<i>Lord High Chancellor</i>
Balfour, Earl	<i>Lord President of the Council</i>
Chamberlain, Austen	<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>
Horne, Sir Robert	<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>
Shortt, Edward, K.C.	<i>Secretary of State for Home Affairs</i>
Curzon, Marquess	<i>Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs</i>
Churchill, Winston Spencer	<i>Secretary of State for the Colonies</i>
Evans, Sir L. Worthington	<i>Secretary of State for War</i>
Peel, Viscount	<i>Secretary of State for India</i>
Lee of Fareham, Lord	<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>
Baldwin, Stanley	<i>President of the Board of Trade</i>
Fisher, Herbert A. L.	<i>President of the Board of Education</i>
Boscawen, Sir Arthur G.	<i>President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries</i>
Greenwood, Sir Hamar	<i>Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland</i>
Macnamara, Dr. T. J.	<i>Minister of Labour</i>
Mond, Sir Alfred	<i>Minister of Health</i>
Crawford and Balcarres, Earl of	<i>Minister of Transport and First Commissioner of Works</i>

NOTE.—The office of Secretary for Scotland was vacant at the time of the resignation of the Coalition Cabinet, on October 19, 1922. Mr. Robert Munro had been appointed Lord Justice Clerk.

- (¹) Viscount Milner relinquished his post, in February, 1921, to Mr. Winston Churchill, who was succeeded by Sir Laming Worthington Evans. The last-mentioned was succeeded by Mr. Ian Macpherson, who vacated the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland to Sir Hamar Greenwood.
- (²) Mr. E. S. Montagu relinquished his post to Viscount Peel.
- (³) Mr. Walter Long, on his elevation to the peerage in 1921, was succeeded by Lord Lee of Fareham, and Sir Arthur G. Boscawen succeeded the latter as Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.
- (⁴) Dr. Addison vacated his post, in 1921, to Sir Alfred Mond, First Commissioner of Works; Sir Eric Geddes resigned his post of Minister of Transport, in 1921; and the two latter offices, combined, were filled by the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres.

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